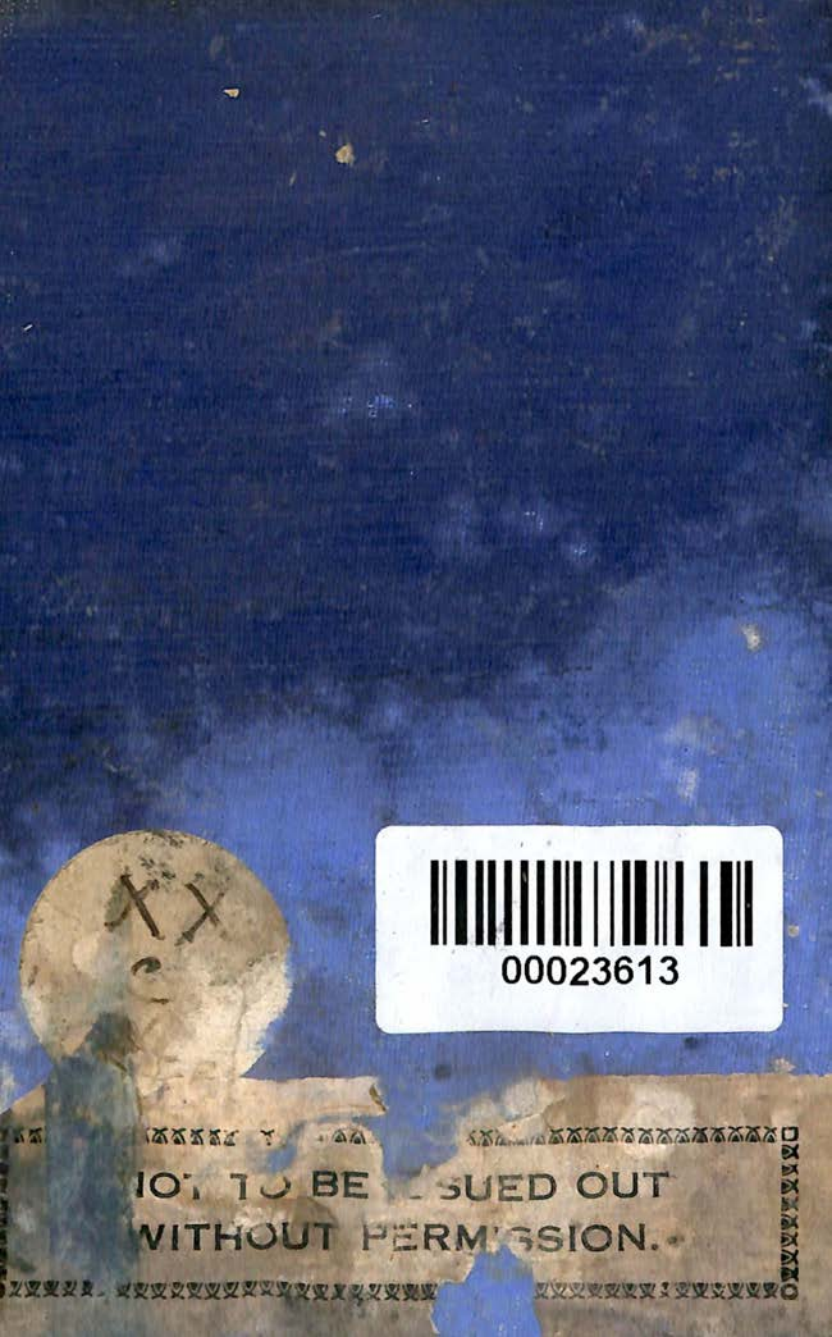
00023613

NOT TO BE ISSUED OUT
WITHOUT PERMISSION.

BOMBAY BRANCH

OF THE

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

# CALDERON

*AN ESSAY ON*

# THE LIFE AND GENIUS OF CALDERON

WITH TRANSLATIONS FROM HIS 'LIFE 'S A DREAM'
AND 'GREAT THEATRE OF THE WORLD'

23613
ac

BY THE

ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN

AND CHANCELLOR OF THE ORDER OF ST PATRICK

*SECOND EDITION*

*REVISED AND IMPROVED*

London
MACMILLAN AND CO.
1880

*All rights reserved*

LONDON : PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

# PREFACE

TO

# THE SECOND EDITION.

THIS little volume, published some four-and-twenty years ago, in 1856, has now been long out of print. I should perhaps have done better in letting it silently drop out of sight and disappear. The interest in the poet, though not absolutely non-existent, is exceedingly faint. 'The bright face of Calderon,' for which place was found for a season in Tennyson's *Palace of Art*, has long since vanished from it. Then, too, the difficulties of reproducing him in metrical forms which shall satisfy the English translator or the English reader present themselves to me as nearly or quite insurmountable. The causes of this I have sought in this volume at some length

to show; and, in any event, I fear have succeeded only too well in showing that they are difficulties not surmountable by myself. I am told, however, that the little book is still sometimes asked for. With this much of encouragement I have brought it up, so far as my leisure would allow, to the present time and to my present knowledge; and I put it forward once more in case there should be any indeed caring to have it at command, and to obtain such glimpses of a great artist as I am able in it to give.

DUBLIN: *March* 1880.

# CONTENTS.


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | THE LIFE AND TIMES OF CALDERON . . | 1 |
| II. | THE GENIUS OF CALDERON (HIS PLAYS) . . | 33 |
| III. | THE GENIUS OF CALDERON (HIS AUTOS) . . | 86 |
| IV. | BEAUTIE OF CALDERON . . . . . | 112 |
| V. | CALDERON IN ENGLAND . . . . . | 135 |
| VI. | TRANSLATIONS FROM CALDERON: 'LIFE'S A DREAM.' . . . . . | 152 |
| VII. | 'THE GREAT THEATRE OF THE WORLD' . . | 195 |

ON THE

# LIFE, TIMES, AND GENIUS OF CALDERON.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE LIFE AND TIMES OF CALDERON.

THERE are few poets, who have been so differently judged, who have been set so high, and set so low, as Calderon; few, who have been made the objects, on one side, of such enthusiastic admiration and applause; on the other, of such extreme depreciation and contempt. Consult the Schlegels, or any other of his chief German admirers, and you would suppose that in him Shakespeare had found his peer, that he had attained unto 'the first three,' to Homer and Dante and Shakespeare, and that he, a fourth, occupied a throne of equal dignity with theirs. For Sismondi, on the contrary, and for others not a few, he is little better than a dexterous play-wright, an adroit master

of stage-effect; a prodigal squanderer of poetical gifts, which, indeed, they do not deny to have been eminent, on a Spanish populace, whose tastes he flattered, and from whom he obtained that meed of present favour and applause which was all that he could justly claim for his own.

And perhaps there has been still wider divergence and disagreement in the estimates which have been formed of the ethical worth of this poet. 'In this great and divine master the enigma of life is not merely expressed, but solved;' these are the words of Frederic Schlegel, setting him in this above Shakespeare, who for the most part is content, according to him, with putting the riddle of life, without attempting to resolve it. And again, 'In every situation and circumstance Calderon is, of all dramatic poets, the most Christian.' And Augustus Schlegel, who had not his brother's Roman Catholic sympathies to affect his judgment, in a passage of rare eloquence in his 'Lectures on Dramatic Literature,'* characterizes the religious poetry of Calderon as one never-ending hymn of thanksgiving, ascending continually to the throne of God. Falling in, too, with the very point of his brother's praise, 'Blessed man!' he exclaims, 'he had escaped from the wild labyrinths of doubt into the stronghold of belief; from thence, with undis-

turbed tranquillity of soul, he beheld and portrayed the storms of the world; to him human life was no longer a dark riddle.' These two set the example; many followed in their train.

Others, meanwhile, have not been wanting who have been able to see nothing but what is perverse and morally injurious in his poetry. Thus Salfi goes so far as to say that he can never read Calderon without indignation, accuses him of having no other aims but to make his genius subservient to the lowest prejudices and superstitions of his countrymen. Sismondi in the same spirit designates him as 'the poet of the Inquisition' (the phrase is his own), of Romanism in its lowest forms, in its most extravagant divorce of religion from morality; what morality he has being utterly perverted, the Spanish punctilio in its bloodiest excess; with much more in the same strain.*

* No one, however, of these comes near a recent German critic, J. L. Klein, who is writing a *History of the Drama*, throughout all the world (*Geschichte des Drama's*), and who devotes five thick volumes to the Spanish Drama (Leipzig, 1872—1875), and of these one, and a large part of another, more than eight hundred pages in all, to Calderon. His book is penetrated with the wildest, most fanatical hatred of this poet, his art, his morality, his religion; so wild that it reads often like the work of a madman. On the slightest provocation, that is, if anyone has ventured to praise or admire anything in Calderon, or on no provocation at all, he goes off in a rage which often leaves him to an ordinary German scholar nearly unintelligible. Thus Vera Tassis, the poet's earliest biographer, mentions that on the mother's side he came of a noble Flemish family long settled in Castile. This does not seem a peculiarly pro-

Many, too, of those who abstain from passing any such strong moral condemnation on the Spanish poet, or looking at his writings from any such earnest ethical point of view, while they give him credit for a certain amount of technical dramatic skill, have no genuine sympathy with him, no hearty admiration for him. They find everywhere in his plays more to blame than to praise; brilliant but cold conceits, oriental hyperboles, the language of the fancy usurping the place of the language of the heart; and when they praise him the most, it is not as one of the stars shining with a steady lustre in the poetical firmament, but as an eccentric meteor, filling the mind of the beholder with astonishment rather than with admiration. Such a 'frigid' character of him (it is his own

vocative statement, but it calls out the following burst of wrath: 'So glüht denn auch ein Tropfen germanischen Bluts in dieses seraphischen Theologen-Poeten, dieses castilischen Dichter-Scholasticus, dieses Doctor Mysticus der spanischen Komödie dogmentrunkenem Gehirn (iv. 2. p. 448). An unfortunate critic expresses his admiration for something Calderon has written. Klein denounces him as 'einer der stolalüftungs-eifrigsten und kniebeugungsbeflissensten Akolythen, Ministranten und Rauchfassschwenker unseres messpriesterlichen Dichters' (iv. 2. p. 464). And so he goes on for those eight hundred pages, warning his readers against any further dealings with the Spanish poet in words like these: 'Fort, fort, aus dieser dramatischen Nekropolis voll glänzender Mausoleen, kunstreicher Aschenkrüge und kostbarer unter dem Moder gefundenen Schmucksachen' (p. 670). The book, which is by no means wanting in the vigour of an earnest hate, is altogether a literary curiosity; certainly I have never seen anything in the least like it.

word) Mr. Hallam * has given, acknowledging at the same time the slightness of his acquaintance both with Calderon himself, and with the language in which he has written; and such the author [Southey? or Lockhart?] of an able article in the 'Quarterly Review,'† with whose judgment Hallam has consented in the main.‡

That my own judgment does not agree with theirs who set him thus low in the scale of poetical merit, still less with theirs who charge him with that profound moral perversity, I need hardly affirm. For small and slight as this volume is, I should have been little tempted to bestow the labour it has cost me on that which, as poetry, seemed to me of little value; and still less disposed to set forward in any way the study of a writer who, being what his more earnest censurers affirm, could only exert a mischievous influence, if he exerted any, on his readers. How far my judgment approaches that of his enthusiastic admirers, what abatements it seems needful to make on their praises as extravagant and excessive, what real and substantial worth will still, as I believe, remain, it will be my endeavour to express this in the pages which follow.

* *Literature of Europe*, vol. iii. p. 532–541.

† Vol. xxv. 1–24, *The Spanish Drama*.

‡ It is curious that Lord Macaulay, who two or three times mentions in his *Journal* the reading of a play of Calderon as part of his day's work, on no occasion expresses an opinion, good, bad or indifferent, about it.

But these considerations will be most fitly introduced by a brief sketch of Calderon's life, and of the conditions of Spain, political and moral, before and during the period when he flourished, so far as these may be assumed to have affected him and his art. So shall we be able better to understand (and it is not unworthy of study), that wonderful burst of dramatic invention, undoubtedly after the Greek and English, the most glorious explosion of genius in this kind which the world has ever beheld, and which, beginning some ten or fifteen years before Calderon's birth, may be said to have expired when he died. There are indeed only three great original dramatic literatures in the world, and this, of which Calderon is the central figure, is one. Greece, England, and Spain are the only three countries, in the western world at least, which boast an independent drama, one going its own way, growing out of its own roots, not timidly asking what others have done before, but boldly doing that which its own native impulses urged it to do; the utterance of the national heart and mind, accepting no laws from without, but only those which it has imposed on itself, as laws of its true liberty, and not of bondage; so rich, and so conscious of its riches, that it did not care to beg or to borrow, however from time to time it might lay violent hands on the property of others. The Roman drama and the French are

avowedly imitations; nor can all the vigour and even originality in detail which the former displays, vindicate for it an independent position; much less can the latter, which, at least in the nobler region of tragedy, is altogether an artificial production, claim this; indeed it does not seek to do so, finding its glory in the renunciation of any such claim. Germany has some fine plays, standing each of them isolated and apart, but no national dramatic literature; the same must be said of Italy; and the period has long since gone by for both when it would have been possible that this want should be supplied.

For us, who behold Spain only in the depth of her present bankruptcy, literal and figurative, it is difficult to realize the heights of power and dignity and honour at which she stood in the sixteenth century, and, while as yet the secret of her decadence was not divined, during a portion of the seventeenth; the extent to which the Spaniard was honoured with the admiration, the fear, and the hatred of the rest of Europe. That sixteenth had been for him a century of achievements almost without parallel. At the close of the century preceding, the Christians of Spain with the taking of Granada had brought their long crusade at home to a triumphant close. But these eight hundred years of struggle with the infidel had impressed their stamp

deeply on the national character. 'As iron sharpeneth iron,' so had this long collision of races and religions evoked many noble qualities in the Spaniard, but others also most capable of dangerous abuse. War with unbelievers in one shape or another had become almost a necessity of the national mind. The Spanish cavalier might not be moral, but religious, according to that distinction between morality and religion possible in Roman Catholic countries, he always must be, by the same necessity that, to be a gentleman, he must be wellborn and courteous and brave.

The field for the exercise of this Christian chivalry at home was no sooner closed to him than other and ampler fields for its display were opened. Granada was taken in 1492; in the very same year Columbus discovered a New World, to the conquering of which the Spaniard advanced quite as much in the spirit of a crusader as of a gold-seeker; and we wrong him altogether, at least such men as Cortez, if we suppose that only the one passion was real, while the other was assumed. All exploits of fabled heroes of romance were outdone by the actual deeds of these, the Conquistadores, as they were so fitly called—deeds at the recital of which the world, so long as it has admiration for heroic valour and endurance, or indignation for pitiless cruelty, will shudder and wonder. But this

valour was not all to be lavished, nor these cruelties to be practised, on a scene remote from European eyes. The years during which Cortez was slowly winning his way to the final overthrow of the Mexican Empire, were exactly the earliest years of the Reformation in Europe (1518—1521). This Reformation, adopted by the North of Europe, repelled by the South, was by none so energetically repelled as by the Spaniards, who henceforward found a sphere large as the whole civilized world in which to make proof that they were the most Christian of all Christian nations, the most Catholic of all Catholic. Spain did not shrink from her part as champion of the perilled faith, but accepted eagerly the glories and the sacrifices which this championship entailed. Enriched by the boundless wealth of the Western world, having passed in Philip II.'s time from freedom into despotism, and bringing the energies, nursed in freedom, to be wielded with the unity of aim and purpose which despotism possesses, she rose during the sixteenth century ever higher and higher in power and worldly consideration.

It was towards the end of that century, that is, when Lope de Vega took possession of the rude drama of his country, and with the instincts of genius strengthened and enlarged, without disturbing, the old foundations of it, that the great epoch of her drama

began. All that went before was but as the attempts of Kid and Peele, or at the utmost of Marlowe, in ours. The time was favourable for his appearance. Spain must, at this time, have been waiting for her poet. The restless activity which had pushed her forward in every quarter, the spirit of enterprize which had discovered and won an empire in the New World, while it had attached to her some of the fairest provinces and kingdoms of the Old, was somewhat subsiding. She was willing to repose upon her laurels. The wish had risen up to enjoy the fruits of her long and glorious toils; to behold herself, and what was best and highest in her national existence, those ideals after which she had been striving, reflected back upon her in the mirrors which art would supply; for she owed her drama to that proud epoch of national history which was just concluding, as truly as Greece owed the grand explosion of hers, all which has made hers a possession for ever, to the Persian War, and to the high thoughts which were born of that strife, and of its successful and glorious conclusion. When the poet or poets of Spain—for they were many—arose, they found everything ready to their hand. Here was a nation proud of itself, of its fidelity to the Catholic faith, of its championship, at all sacrifices, of that faith, possessing a splendid past history at home and abroad, a history full of incident, of passion, of

marvel, and of suffering; much of that history so recent as to be familiar to all, and much which, though not recent, was familiar still, through ballad and romance everywhere living on the lips of the people. Here was a nation which had set before itself, and in no idle pretence, the loftiest ideals of action; full of the punctilios of valour, of honour, of loyalty; a generation to whom life, their own life, or the life of those dearest, was as dust in the balance compared with the satisfying to the utmost tittle the demands of these; so that one might say, that what Sir Philip Sidney has so beautifully called 'the hate-spot ermeline,' the ermine that rather dies than sullies its whiteness with one spot or stain, was the model they had chosen. Here was a society having fashioned to itself a code of ethics, which, with all of lofty and generous that was in it, was yet often fantastic, exaggerated, perverted, inexorable, bloody; but one that claimed unquestioning submission from all, and about the obeying of which no hesitation might for a moment be admitted. What materials for the dramatic poet were here!

Then too there were circumstances, which modified and rendered less fatal than might have been expected, even those influences that were manifestly hostile to the free development of genius in Spain. Thus it is quite true that Spain may be said finally to

have passed from a land of constitutional freedom into a despotism, with the crushing by Philip II. of the liberties of Aragon. But for all this, the mighty impulses of the free period which went before, did not immediately fail. It is not for a generation or two that despotism effectually accomplishes its work, and displays its power in cramping, dwarfing, and ultimately crushing the faculties of a people. The nation lives for a while on what has been acquired in nobler, freer epochs of its life; and it is not till this is run through and worn out, till the generation which was reared in a better time has passed away, and also the generation which they have formed and moulded under the not yet extinct traditions of freedom, that the whole extent of the spiritual, moral, and intellectual mischief becomes apparent. Thus the first half of the reign of Lewis XIV. was full of the activities of genius; these had quite disappeared in the second. Nor must it be left out of sight that the Spanish was not an anti-national despotism, such as an English would have been, if Charles I. had succeeded in his attempt to govern without Parliaments. On the contrary it was a despotism in which the nation gloried; which itself helped forward; one therefore which it did not feel to humiliate, depress, and degrade, as a despotism must do, running directly counter to the national feeling, the permanent badge of unsuccessful resistance to a detested yoke.

Even the Inquisition itself, that hateful and, as Montalembert calls it, that 'monstrous' institution, by discouraging, and indeed absolutely repressing, all activity of thought in every other direction—destined as it was absolutely to extinguish it in all—yet for a season gave a mightier impulse to its movements in one direction. There was one province, that of poetry, and, above all, of dramatic poetry, over which it never seems to have extended that jealous and suspicious supervision with which it watched every other region of human enquiry.

Such are some features of the Spain in which Lope de Vega, Calderon, and their peers grew up; under these influences they were formed. At the time, indeed, when Calderon was born, and much more when he was rising into manhood, the glory of his country was somewhat on its decline. But though grey hairs were upon her, she knew it not. Many glimpses of her past glory gilded her yet. Many pledges and evidences of her former greatness, not a few bequests of that heroic past, remained with her still. The Netherlands were not yet hopelessly lost. Portugal was still an appanage of the Spanish crown. The youthful Condé had not destroyed at Rocroi the prestige of that hitherto invincible infantry of Spain (1643). There had been a time when Philip II., 'that sad intelligencing tyrant,' as Milton describes him, had

'mischiefed the world with his mines of Ophir,' and Spain might still believe herself rich, because the treasures of the Indies continued to flow through her coffers; not knowing that these were barren-making streams for her, extinguishing in their passage her own industry and manufactures, and then passing on to enrich foreign or hostile soils.* The secret of her hopeless decay was concealed in great part, alike from herself and from others, from all indeed but the most understanding. It was to Spain that our first James just at this period turned, when he sought a wife for his only son, as counting that alliance more desirable than any other in Europe.† And when that marriage came to nothing, and the prospects of a contest with Spain rapidly succeeded those of an alliance with her, how powerful she still was in the judgment of the statesmen of Europe may be seen from the very remarkable 'Considerations touching a War with Spain,' 1624, by Lord Bacon. 'A war with Spain,' he there

* See the Countess d'Aulnoy's *Travels in Spain*, Letter 12, for a curious sample of the extent to which it fared thus with the gold and silver brought in the treasure-ships from the Indies.

† Calderon was resident in Madrid in the year of Prince Charles' romantic visit to that city—(1623)—a young poet of rising fame, but as yet filling no such office as would cause him to have any share in the shows and triumphs with which that visit was celebrated. A few years later, and we should probably not have wanted some gorgeous mythological spectacle from his pen in which the alliance and future nuptials would have been shadowed forth.

declares, 'is a mighty work:' and this, even while the keen-eyed statesman plainly saw that the colossus was not so strong in reality as in appearance and reputation, and spied with a searching eye its weaknesses; and, most important of all, did not fail to note that every day the relative strength of the two states was changing in favour of England, which was ever rising in strength as Spain was falling.

With all this the decadence of Spain was not openly acknowledged as yet. Long after others had divined, and even proclaimed this, her own duteous children refused to see it. The near future of their country's fall was hidden from them. They saw not her, who a little while before was the chief and foremost among the nations, already failing in the race, to fall presently into the rear, nay to be thrown out altogether from the great onward march of European civilization.* It was well, at least for her poets and her painters, that for them it was still possible to hide this from their eyes. A very little later, when the symptoms of her rapid decay became more numerous and also more evident, so that even these could not have missed them, it would have been impossible for a great poet to have arisen in Spain. For a great poet, without a great

* Had Shakespeare's prophetic eye already caught a glimpse of this, when he speaks of one as coming

'From tawny Spain, *lost in the world's debate* ?

country, without a great people for him to be proud of, and which he feels shall in return be proud of him, without this action and reaction, never has been, and can never be. Elegant and even spirited lyrics, graceful idyls, comedies of social life, with all the small underwood of poetry, can very well exist, as they often have existed, and even thriven, where there is little or no national life or feeling; but the grander and sublimer forms of poetry, epos and tragedy and the loftier lyrics, can grow out of, and nourish themselves from, no other soil than that which a vigorous national life supplies. The names of Calderon and of his dramatic contemporaries, and so too no less of the more famous among the Spanish painters (the lives of Velasquez and Murillo running pretty nearly parallel to his), are evidences that such a period was not yet overlived in Spain. At the same time it must be owned that he stood on its extremest verge. He who saw the sun of his country's glory, if not indeed at its zenith, yet still high in the heaven, saw it also in its swift decline and descent; and had his long life been extended only a little longer, he would have seen it set altogether.

The most important source from which the materials for Calderon's life are derived is a short biography written by his friend, Vera Tassis. This was prefixed

by him to an edition of Calderon's plays, the first volume of which was published the year after his death.* Brief as this record is, it contains even less than the first contemplation of its narrow limits would lead us to apprehend; for it is composed in the worst style of affected eloquence; however this fault may be partially redeemed by the tone of true affection which makes itself felt even through a medium so unfavourable as this. Considering too the biographer's opportunities of knowledge, derived from a sister of the poet who survived him, and from other of his friends, as well as from personal intercourse (for he speaks of Calderon's death as being to him the loss of a parent, a master, and a friend), its notices are singularly few and unsatisfactory. The writer would indeed have deserved much better of the after-world, if, instead of pompous and turgid eulogiums, which would have fitted almost equally well any eminent poet who had ever lived, he had given a few characteristic details of Calderon's life and habits: these unfortunately are almost wholly wanting.

And even the little information which he does afford us is not altogether accurate. Thus he stumbles at the very threshold, making the year 1601 to have been that of Calderon's birth, a mistake which has

* This edition (Madrid, 1682–1691, 9 voll. 4to) is naturally the first which contains his collected plays.

since propagated itself widely ; while an extract from his baptismal register, preserved in a very trustworthy work, called *The Sons of Madrid*,* and entitled, as documentary evidence, to far greater weight, gives Feb. 14th, 1600, as the day of his baptism ; not to say that in another rare work,† published by a friend in his honour, and written immediately after his death, it is distinctly stated on the authority of Calderon himself, that he was born Jan. 17th, 1600 ; in the last year, that is, of the sixteenth century, and not in the first of the seventeenth. Madrid had the honour of being his birth-place ; as it had been the birth-place of Lope de Vega.

His father, Secretary to the Treasury Board under Philip II. and Philip III., was of a good family in the Montaña, a mountainous district so called in the neighbourhood of Burgos ; his mother of a noble Flemish family long settled in Castile. His parents were, according to *The Sons of Madrid*, 'very Christian and discreet persons, who gave their children an education conformable to their illustrious lineage.' These children were four—an eldest son, Don Diego, who succeeded to the family estates and honours ; a daughter, Dorothea, who became a professed nun of the Order of St. Clare, and survived the poet by a year ; Don Josef, who followed the career of arms,

* *Los Hijos de Madrid*, vol. iv. p. 218. † *Obelisco Funebre.*

and fell in battle in the year 1645; and Don Pedro, the youngest, with whom we have to do.* He received his first rudiments of education in the Jesuit College at Madrid; and then for five years studied philosophy and the Scholastic Theology (of which fact abundant traces appear in his writings), at the University of Salamanca. Leaving it at nineteen, he spent the five or six years that followed at the capital. It was in some friendly competitions among the poets of his time, poetic tournaments in which he had Lope de Vega sometimes for a judge and sometimes for a competitor, that Calderon first made any name for himself. This was as early as 1620, and two years after, at the splendid shows and festivals which celebrated the canonization of St. Isidore, the peasant saint of Madrid, he, in the pleasant words of Lope, earned 'in his tender years the laurels which time is wont to produce only with grey hairs.' In an interesting little fragment of autobiography to which I shall presently have occasion to refer again, he tells us that it was his desire to win the prize on these occasions, and his partial success, which first made a poet of him; effectually drawing him away from sterner studies in the Civil and the Canon Law, to which his father had designed him.

* *Los Hijos de Madrid*, vol. i. p. 305; vol. ii. p. 218; vol. iii. p. 24.

Like so many other of the most distinguished authors of Spain, he began his active career as a soldier; from his twenty-fifth year to his thirty-fifth serving in the Milanese and in the Low Countries, where Spain was still carrying on a war for the recovery of her revolted Provinces, but one seen long since by all others but herself to be hopeless. Many have supposed that he was present at the siege and taking of Breda by Spinola, the famous Genoese captain in the service of Spain (1625); inferring this from his singular familiarity with all the details of this illustrious feat of arms, as displayed in his play called *The Siege of Breda.** It is by no means one of his first-class plays. Others there are, however, which rank among his best, as *The Fairy Lady*, *The Physician of his own Honour*, *It is Better than it Was*, *Life's a Dream*, which also belong to this period, and make

* The surrender of Breda was a subject which employed the pencil of Velasquez as well as the pen of Calderon. The picture bearing this name is a chief ornament of the Royal Gallery at Madrid, and one of the greatest works of a great master. (See Stirling, *Velasquez and his Works*, 148.) The play, though spirited, is too much a mere chronicle of the siege and capitulation. It was probably a mere piece for the occasion; but one for which he was furnished with the most abundant, and, apparently, most accurate information. It is pleasant to notice the justice which Calderon does to the gallantry of Morgan, an English captain, who with a small body of his countrymen, as we know from other sources, assisted in the defence of the place; and of whom he does not scruple in as many words to say that 'he was the soul of the defence.'

plain that his military duties did not so occupy him, but that he found time for the cultivation of those rare poetic gifts which now he could not fail to be conscious were his. It is difficult, too, to suppose that he did not during these times find his way more than once to Madrid, where his pieces were taking the world by storm. Certainly he was not forgotten there. In 1630 his fame was so well established that Lope de Vega recognizes him as his true and equal successor, the heir presumptive of his throne; while five years later the death of Lope (1635) left him the undisputed occupant of the highest place among the poets of Spain, a pre-eminence which he held without the challenge of a rival to the end of his life, and which was justified by the production in the same year of two such famous works as his *Purgatory of St. Patrick*, and his *Jealousy the greatest Monster*.

It was in obedience to the summons of Philip IV. that Calderon returned to Madrid, and resigned, at least for a time, the active pursuit of arms. This monarch, who in 1621 had succeeded his father on the throne, himself an author, and writing his own language with elegance and precision,* was passionately

* Pellicer, a Spanish scholar of the last century, and Librarian of the Royal Library at Madrid, states that in that Library are preserved MS. translations by this king of Francis Guicciardini's *History of the Wars of Italy*, and also of his nephew's *Description of the Low Countries*; to the latter of which a graceful and sensible

addicted to the drama. Indeed some plays, said not to be without merit, are ascribed, but on insufficient evidence, to him. Unfortunately he devoted to his artistic and literary pursuits not a little of that time and those energies, which would have been far better bestowed on the fulfilment of those kingly duties so lamentably neglected by him. But so much conceded, there was not a little in the character of the youthful monarch (he was five years younger than the poet), which was gracious, amiable, and attractive;* and a little anecdote or two imply that the relations between the two were easy and familiar. Director of the Court theatre, which was the post that Calderon, whether nominally or not, yet really occupied now, does not appear a very promising, nor yet a very dignified one, for a great poet to assume; yet an office not very dis-

prologue has been prefixed by the king (*Origen y Progresos de la Comedia en España*, Madrid, 1804, vol. i. p. 162).

* For a happy sketch of his character, see Stirling, *Velasquez and his Works*, London, 1855, p. 46–48. Dunlop's *Memoirs of Spain during the Reigns of Philip the Fourth and Charles the Second*, 2 vols., Edinburgh, 1834, are not very profound, and their idiom is occasionally rather Scotch than English. They contain, however, enough of information agreeably conveyed, and which is not very easily found elsewhere, to occasion a regret that he never carried out a purpose entertained by him (see vol. i. p. ix.; vol. ii. p. 415) of dedicating a third volume to the history of dramatic art in Spain during the seventeenth century. As it is, the intention of devoting an especial treatise to this subject has caused him almost wholly to pass by a matter, which in the life of such a monarch as Philip IV. could else have hardly failed to occupy some prominence in his book.

similar Goethe was willing for many years to fill at Weimar; and no doubt, like so many other positions, it was very much what the holder was able and willing to make it.

A member of the Military Order of Santiago (in 1637 he had received this honour), Calderon had the opportunity of shewing in his middle age that his martial ardour was not quenched. On occasion of the revolt in Catalonia in 1640 the members of the three Military Orders were summoned to take the field. His biographer tells us that it was only by a device that Calderon was able to take that part in the perils of the campaign to which he felt that duty and honour invited him. The king wished to detain the poet at his side. Garcîlasso de la Vega, the author of the most elegant lyrics after the Italian models which Spain had produced, had perished quite in his youth at the storming of a fortified mill, leaving only the first-fruits of his graceful genius behind him. Philip may not have been willing to expose a far greater light to a like premature extinction. But whatever was his motive, he desired to hinder the poet from going; and this he supposed that he had effectually done when he gave him a festal piece to prepare, which according to the king's anticipation would abundantly occupy him until after the expedition had set out. Calderon, however, defeated his purpose,

bringing his appointed task with such rapidity to a close, that he was able to follow and join the army in time, as Vera Tassis tells us, to share in its dangers until peace was concluded.

Such is the account of his biographer; and such conduct would be entirely in keeping with the chivalrous character which we ascribe to the poet; yet it is not without its difficulties. In the first place, the king could only have expected by such an artifice as this to detain him from the perils of the campaign on the assumption that the war would be over almost as soon as begun. A fleet which had once set sail it might be impossible afterwards to join; but infinite opportunities must have offered of joining an army only two or three provinces off; and between it and the capital there must have been constant communication. Perhaps such expectation of immediate success may have prevailed at Madrid. As it proved, the contest in Catalonia lasted for twelve years, the troubles being only brought to an end in 1652. And this makes another difficulty. Vera Tassis states that Calderon remained with the army till peace was concluded; which would be for these twelve years. It is quite certain that at a far earlier day than this he was again in attendance on the Court. In transient contact he was with it as early as 1641. A document of that date, recently found, attests the high esteem in which

at this time he stood, and the sense in high quarters of his merits as a soldier. The general who commanded in Catalonia desiring to make a confidential communication concerning the organization of the army to the king, selected the soldier-poet to fulfil a mission which could hardly have failed to prove both difficult and delicate. Nor was this all. Long before the revolt was ended, the king had succeeded in attaching the poet to himself, and detaining him there, as, according to his biographer's account, he had vainly attempted to do at its first outbreak. In 1649 he took a prominent share in preparing the shows and festivities which welcomed the arrival of Philip's second queen, Anna Maria of Austria, to Madrid; giving as he does, in his *Beware of Still Waters*, a lively account of her progress thither; while in 1651, a year before the revolt was quelled, he had taken holy orders: for, like Lope de Vega, like so many other of his countrymen illustrious in war, or statesmanship, or art, the career which he began as a soldier he concluded as a priest.

Before, however, the Spanish cavalier quite disappears from our vision, and the priest takes his room, let us profit by a passing glimpse of the former, such as he himself has lent us. A reply, half jesting, half earnest, to a lady who desired of him some information about himself, *de vitâ et moribus* as he describes it,

is not without some points of interest. This, in his own handwriting, and belonging to an early stage of his life, came to light some twenty-five years since at Seville, in the library of a priest sold after his death; nor does there seem the slightest reason to question its authenticity, although its tone suggests its cautious use, and that not every word in it was to be taken in the strictest letter. Something he tells of his personal appearance to his fair enquirer, as that he was of middle height, ranging neither with the tall nor the short—as that his forehead was large, teeming with something he knows not exactly what, for, though at every change of the moon he is visited with labour-pangs, these never bring anything to the birth. His eyes are deep set in their orbits, so deeply, he says, that they are not easy to find; while his long and upturned mustachios might be regarded as going to seek them in their hiding places. On his left temple is a scar, which he owes to the point of a sword, but into further particulars about it, and how and where he got it, he does not enter. His good mother, he further tells us, aimed by a pious device to secure him for the priesthood, and the Bishop of Troy gave him in his infancy the first tonsure, but of this nothing but a little coronal remained when he wrote. Somewhat later in his life that wish of his mother was to obtain its fulfilment, and in the year just named the time had arrived.

In a Church so richly endowed as the Spanish was then, and one in which the monarch had been so successful in retaining the richest endowments in his own gift, it was not likely that Calderon's merits would long remain without recognition. The favour of his royal patron speedily conferred more than one preferment upon him; and he continued, from time to time, to receive new proofs of his master's liberality, and of his wish to attach him as closely as possible to his person. His high court-favour indeed ended with the life of Philip. The death of that monarch (1665) was doubtless to him not merely the loss of a patron, but almost of a friend. With it the faint nimbus of glory, which had until then continued, more or less, to surround the Spanish monarchy, quite disappeared. A feeble minor, as weak in intellect as in age, occupied the throne. The court was the seat of miserable and disgraceful intrigues. From that empire, once so proud and strong, cities and provinces were rent away by the violence or fraud of Lewis XIV., almost as often as he chose to stretch out his hand and take them. He was indeed only hindered from tearing that empire piecemeal by the expectation that a descendant of his own should ere long inherit whatever of it might still remain.

Literature with everything else felt the deeply depressing influence of the time. Calderon, however,

still sang on; he belonged to a better epoch, and brought the poetic energies of that epoch into the evil days upon which he was now fallen; though he too began about this time to shew, in some degree, the effects of age, and, it may be, of the sunken and fading splendours of his native land. To this later period of the poet's life belongs a very slight and transient glimpse which we obtain of him, one however which, in default of ampler information, must not be passed by. It is a French traveller, who in his *Diary of a Journey in Spain* * thus writes:—'Yesterday came the Marquis of Eliche,† eldest son of Don Luis de Haro, and Monsieur de Barrière, and took me to the theatre. The play, which had been before brought forward, but was newly revived, was naught, although it had Don Pedro Calderon for author. At a later hour I made a visit to this Calderon, who is held the greatest poet and the most illustrious genius in Spain at the present day. He

* Boisel, *Journal de Voyage d'Espagne*, Paris, 1669, p. 298.

† This was he who a few years earlier (in 1662) set on foot a small Gunpowder plot of his own, and nearly succeeded in blowing up Philip IV., with the royal family, at the theatre of the Buen Retiro. As he was a master of the ceremonies or Lord Chamberlain, to whom the oversight of the royal theatricals had been especially committed (Schach, *Nachträge*, 74), this would have been easier to him than to others. He was pardoned for his father's sake. His good conduct in the field seems to have caused his treason to be forgotten; and he rose in the succeeding reign to the highest offices in the State.

is Knight of the Order of Santiago, and Chaplain to the Chapel of the Kings at Toledo; but I gathered from his conversation that his head-piece was furnished poorly enough. We disputed a good while on the rules of the drama, which in this land are not recognized, and about which the Spaniards make themselves merry.' Assuredly this little notice is not without a certain point of its own. When one calls to mind the extent to which at this time the French theatre was living on orts and scraps stolen from the Spanish, it is impossible not to admire the sense of an immeasurable superiority with which the Frenchman looked down on the benighted Spaniard who was ignorant of the unities.

Though no longer a foremost favourite of the Court, Calderon's relations to it still continued, and his services were put in requisition whenever the so-called *fiestas*, or dramatic spectacles for peculiar occasions, were needed. With the nation his popularity survived undiminished to the close of his life. This life, which was one of singular peace and outward prosperity, he brought to an end on Whit-Sunday, May 25, 1681, his years running exactly parallel to those of that century of which he was so illustrious an ornament. A little volume of funeral eulogies, published the same year by a gentleman belonging to the

household of his patron and friend, the Duke of Veraguas,* is almost utterly barren of any historical notices about him of the slightest value. The only two facts which can be gleaned from it are these: the first, that poor Charles II. shed tears at the announcement of his death, an act which the writer considers 'not merely pardonable but praiseworthy,' and which, whether true or only reported, seems to imply that his genius was in a measure still recognized even at the Court; the other, that three thousand persons with torches attended his funeral. This, though it fell infinitely below the extraordinary solemnity and magnificence with which the obsequies of Lope de Vega were celebrated half a century before, yet tells of no slight honour in which the nation held its greatest, as he was the last of its great, poets. He was buried in the parish church of San Salvador, at Madrid, and a magnificent monument (so Vera Tassis calls it), surmounted with his portrait, was raised over his remains.†

* *Funebres Elogios*, Valencia, 1681. Ticknor (vol. ii. p. 351) implies that he has never fallen in with these; but a copy of them exists in the British Museum.

† With some alterations which had taken place in this church about the middle of last century, a time probably when Calderon's fame was at its nadir, all traces of the exact place where his remains were deposited and of his tomb itself had disappeared. However in 1840, in pulling down the decayed cloister of St. Salvador, a tomb was discovered under the walls of the vestry, whose inscription proved it to be his. His remains were transferred with considerable pomp and solemnity to the church of our Lady of Atocha, which,

All notices which we have of Calderon from contemporaries are pleasant, and give us the impression of one who was loved, and who was worthy to be loved. In his old age he used to collect his friends round him on his birthdays, and tell them amusing stories of his earlier life.* Vera Tassis recounts the noblest names of Spain as in the list of his personal friends; nor does he fail to notice the signal absence of all gall from his pen, the entire freedom of his spirit from all sentiments of jealousy and envy. Calderon's writings bear out this praise. All his allusions to those who might be accounted his rivals and competitors are honourable alike to him and to them. There were but two great authors, between whom and himself any rivalry could exist; the one certainly of more genial humour, of deeper and more universal gifts, Cervantes, who, dying in 1617, had passed from life's scene as Calderon was entering actively upon it; the other, Lope de Vega, probably on the whole his inferior,

may be regarded as a kind of national Pantheon (*Foreign Quarterly Review*, April 1841, 227). It was, I suppose, upon this occasion that Zorrilla's *Apoteósis de Don Pedro Calderon de la Barca*, Madrid, 1840, was composed. I know nothing of the other poems of Zorrilla, esteemed the best poet of modern Spain; but this, though evidencing some insight into the true character of Calderon's genius, is on the whole poor and feeble.

* Prologue to the *Obelisco Funebre*. I have never seen this rare volume, but take this and a former reference to it from Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature*.

but occupying then, by right of prior possession, in the estimation of most, the highest seat in the Spanish Parnassus. There exist some pleasing lines of Calderon addressed to the latter, and he never misses an opportunity of paying a compliment to Cervantes. Indeed he dramatized a portion of *Don Quixote*, although this work has not reached us. If he indulges sometimes in a little playful raillery on the writings of his contemporaries, it is only of the same kind which from time to time he bestows on his own. That his hand and heart were largely open to the poorer and less successful brethren of the poetical guild, his biographer very distinctly assures us. But alas! of a multitude of other things which we should care to know he has told us nothing. If we would complete our image of the poet, it must be from the internal evidence of his writings. Of his outer life we are nearly as ignorant as of that of Shakespeare or of Spenser. Of this we know almost nothing more than has here been recounted.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE GENIUS OF CALDERON.

### (HIS PLAYS.)

UNWISE admirers convey altogether a wrong impression of Calderon, when, willing to exalt and glorify him the more, they isolate him wholly from his age, passing over all its other worthies to magnify him only, presenting him to us not as one, the brightest indeed in a galaxy of lights, but as the sole particular star in the firmament of Spanish dramatic art. Those who derive their impression from the Schlegels, especially from Augustus, would conclude him to stand thus alone—a poetical Melchisedec, without spiritual father, without spiritual mother, with nothing round him to explain or account for the circumstances of his greatness. But there are no such appearances in literature; great artists, as poets, or painters, or others, almost always cluster: the favourable conditions which produce one, produce many. They are not strewn at nearly equal distances through the periods of a nation's life, but there are brief seasons of marvellous productiveness, with long intervals of comparative barrenness

between ; or it may be the aloe tree of a nation's literature blossoms but once.

And if this be true in other regions of art, above all will it be true in the dramatic literature of a people.* In this, when it deserves the name, a nation is uttering itself, what is nearest to its heart, what it has conceived there of life and life's mystery, and of a possible reconciliation between the world which now is and that ideal world after which it yearns ; and the conditions of a people, which make a grand outburst of the drama possible, make it also inevitable that this will utter itself not by a single voice but by many. Even Shakespeare himself, towering as he does immeasurably above all his compeers, is not a single isolated peak rising abruptly from the level plain ; but one of a chain and cluster of mountain-summits ; and his altitude, so far from being dwarfed and diminished, can only be rightly estimated when regarded in relation to theirs. And if this is true even of him, it is

* Little more than a century covers the whole period intervening between the birth of Æschylus, B.C. 525, and the death of Euripides, B.C. 406. A period of almost exactly the same duration includes the birth of Lope, 1562, and the death of Calderon, 1681 ; while in our own drama the birth of Marlowe, 1565, and the death of Shirley, 1666, enclose a period considerably shorter, and one capable of a still further abridgment of nearly thirty years ; for although the last of the Elizabethan school of dramatists lived on to 1666, the Elizabethan drama itself may be said to have expired with the commencement of the Civil War, 1640.

much more so of Calderon; who by no means towers so pre-eminently, and out of the reach of all rivalry and competition, above his fellows. First of the Spanish dramatists, he is yet equalled and excelled in this point and in that by one and another; as by Lope in invention and in that naïve freshness which is certainly not one of his merits; by Alarcon in strong delineation of character; by Tirso de Molina in exuberant and festive wit. Let us regard him, then, not as that monster which some would present him to us; but, with all his manifold gifts, still as the orderly birth of his age and nation; and, regarding him as such, proceed to consider what those gifts were, and what he accomplished with them.

When we seek to form an estimate of Calderon, it is in the first place impossible not to admire the immense range of history and fable which supplies him with the materials for his art, and the entire ease and self-possession with which he moves through every province of his poetical domain; and this, even where he is not able to make perfectly good his claim to every portion of it; but shews very plainly by curious lapses and mistakes that, amply furnished as he was, yet learned in the stricter and modern sense of the word he had no right to be called. Thus he has several dramas whose argument is drawn from the Old Testament, *The Locks of Absalom* being perhaps

the noblest of these; of this I shall have occasion to say something more by and by. Still more have to do with the heroic martyrdoms and other legends of Christian antiquity, the victories of the Cross of Christ over all the fleshly and spiritual wickednesses of the ancient heathen world. To this theme, which is one almost undrawn upon in our Elizabethan drama—Massinger's *Virgin Martyr* is the only example I remember—he returns continually, and he has elaborated these plays with peculiar care. Of them *The Wonder-working Magician* * is most celebrated. Perhaps it owed its celebrity, in part at least, to a notion which got early abroad in Germany, that in the Demon who plays so forward a part here there were anticipations of the Mephistopheles of Goethe's *Faust*. The notion was a vain one. The points of resemblance are slight and accidental; the Satan of the nineteenth century proving, when we become intimate with him, a very different personage from the Satan of the seventeenth. But what is really noteworthy is a certain likeness between this apostate Spirit and the fallen Archangel of *Paradise Lost*, both having fallen so far, and yet both so proud and so defiant to the last. In poems such as Beaumont's *Psyche* the Evil Spirit is still the vulgar fiend with horns and tail, and a row of hideous teeth, and not

* See Immermann, *Memorabilien*, vol. ii. p. 219–229; and an article in *Fraser's Magazine*, Feb. 1879.

one of the Sons of the Morning, who, walking on the battlements of heaven, and contemplating his own beauty there, instead of contemplating Him from whom that beauty came, grew giddy with his height, and fell, as only Lucifer could fall, from the highest height to the deepest depth. Milton, so far as I am aware, had no English predecessor in his grander and far more poetical treatment of the fallen Prince of the power of the air. But in *The Wonder-working Magician*, and not in it alone among Calderon's plays, there is a certain anticipation of this treatment; not that one poet owed anything to the other, but only that the native genius of both suggested to both that this ever-present sense of the greatness which once had been his, the splendour with which he once had been clothed, was the truly tragic in his doom, and that therefore which should appear as an ever-present thought with him.* Some other plays, as *The Joseph of Women*, *The Two*

* In a scene of very rare magnificence in this play the Demon introduces himself by aid of a shipwreck, out of which he is the only escaper, to Cyprian, the young philosopher whom he would prevent from embracing the Christian faith. With a few mysterious words he arouses the curiosity of the other, and, at his request, tells his own story. I can only quote it in part; but who can deny that there is here the same unbroken will, the same study of revenge and immortal hate, which clothed with so terrible a grandeur the Satan of Milton? I avail myself of Shelley's translation:—

'Since thou desirest, I will then unveil
Myself to thee;—for in myself I am

*Lovers of Heaven*, deserve to be placed on a level with this. A tender pathetic grace is shed over this last, which gives it a peculiar charm. Then, too, the poet has occupied what one might venture to call the region of sacred mythology, as in *The Sibyl of the East*, in which the profound legends identifying the Cross of Calvary and the Tree of Life are wrought up into a poem of surpassing beauty. In other of these not the Christian, but the Roman Catholic, poet is

A world of happiness and misery ;
This I have lost, and that I must lament
For ever. In my attributes I stood
So high, and so heroically great,
In lineage so supreme, and with a genius
Which penetrated with a glance the world
Beneath my feet, that won by my high merit
A king—whom I may call the King of kings,
Because all others tremble in their pride
Before the terrors of his countenance,
In his high palace roofed with brightest gems
Of living light,—call them the stars of Heaven—
Named me his counsellor. But the high praise
Stung me with pride and envy, and I rose
In mighty competition, to ascend
His seat, and place my foot triumphantly
Upon his subject thrones. Chastised, I know
The depth to which ambition falls ; too mad
Was the attempt, and yet more mad were not
Repentance of the irrevocable deed :—
Therefore I chose this ruin with the glory
Of not to be subdued, before the shame
Of reconciling me with him who reigns
By coward cession.—Nor was I alone,
Nor am I now, nor shall I be alone ;
And there was hope, and there may still be hope,
For many suffrages among his vassals
Hailed me their lord and king, and many still
Are mine, and many more perchance shall be.'

predominant, as in *The Purgatory of St. Patrick*, *The Devotion of the Cross*, *Daybreak in Copacabana*,* this last being the story of the first dawn of the faith in Peru. Whatever there may be in these of superstitious, or, as in one of them there is, of ethically revolting, none but a great poet could have conceived them.

Then, further, his historic drama reaches down from the grey dawn of earliest story to the celebration of events which happened in his own day; it extends from *The Daughter of the Air*,† being the legend of Semiramis, and in Goethe's judgment his most glorious piece ‡ (Goethe, however, seems only to have been familiar with those which had been translated into German), down to *The Siege of Breda*, referred to already. Between these are dramas from Greek history, and from Roman. Of such, *Zenobia the Great* is the best; *The Arms of Beauty*, on the story of Coriolanus, and as poor as its name would indicate, the worst. Others, as *Judas Maccabeus*, are from Jewish; and not a few from the history of modern Europe: thus two at least from English annals; one of these, *The Schism of England*, being his *Henry*

* Translated by Schack, author of the admirable *Geschichte der dramatischen Literatur und Kunst in Spanien* (3 vols. Berlin, 1845, 1846), to which I am often indebted.

† See Immermann, *Memorabilien*, vol. ii. p. 247–71.

‡ Das herrlichste von Calderon's Stücken. It has been recast by Raupach into a German acting play; and from the German translated (the translation is anonymous) into English, 1831.

*VIII.*, and, as may be supposed, written at a very different point of view from Shakespeare's.* It is chiefly curious as shewing what was the popular estimate in Spain of the actors in our great religious reformation; and displays throughout an evident desire to spare the king, and to throw the guilt of his breach with the Roman See on Anna Boleyn and Cardinal Wolsey. But the large majority of Calderon's historical dramas are drawn, as was to be expected in a poet so intensely national, and appealing to so intensely national a feeling, from the annals of his own country. These have the immense advantage of being the embodiment, for the most part, of events, and treatment of persons, already familiar to the popular mind. The heroes of Spanish romance and of Spanish history are here brought forward; and not the remoter names alone, as the Count Lucanor, Peter of Lara, Peter the Cruel (whom the Spanish poets seek to set forth in less revolting colours than historic truth would demand), Henry of Trastamara his brother—not these only, but others much nearer to his own time, and of the century immediately preceding, as Isabella of Castile, Charles V., Francis Pizarro, Almagro, and other

* His main authority here is the book of Nicholas Sanders, *De Origine ac Progressu Schismatis Anglicani.* A little essay on this drama (*Ueber die Kirchentrennung von England, Schauspiel des Don Pedro Calderon*, Berlin, 1819) has been written by F. W. V. Schmidt, and is worth reading.

of the Conquistadores, Philip II., Don John of Austria, Alexander Farnese, Alva, Figueroa, Mendoza, Henry the Navigator, Loyola, Borgia; not to speak of some who were still living when the poet wrote. It is not easy to measure the effect which must have attended the representation of some of these stories. *The Steadfast Prince*—of which, however, the hero is Lusitanian rather than Spanish—is the most celebrated among them.*

Leaving the region of history, and in a world more purely ideal, Calderon has some exquisite mythological pieces. In these he does not, in Cowley's words, merely serve up 'the cold meats of the ancients, new heated and new set forth;' but the old classical story comes forth, as it does in Keats, newborn in the romantic poetry of the modern world. So is it, for instance, in the exquisitely graceful and fanciful piece, *Echo and Narcissus*; but, above all, this is true, where a Christian idea looks through the mythological symbolism, and informs it with its own spirit; as in *The Statue of Prometheus*, and in another play founded on the well-known legend of Cupid and Psyche. For the most part, however, it must be owned that these mythological are the weakest among his productions; being many of them evidently intended merely as vehicles for show and scenic

* For some account of this play see *Blackwood's Magazine*, May 1873.

splendour. They are the works of the poet of the Buen Retiro, the director of the Court entertainments. We pass from these to romantic dramas in which the poet occupies a fable-land altogether of his own creation, as in *Life's a Dream* (an analysis of which, with large translations, will be found in this volume), or draws on the later Greek romances, as in *Theagenes and Chariclea*, or on Boiardo and Ariosto, or, it may be, on the prose tales of the Round Table, as in *The Bridge of Mantible.* On this last Schlegel has bestowed the pains of translation, pains which perhaps might have been better bestowed elsewhere. These form a not inconsiderable group.

Among his *Comedias*—which is the general title whereby all in Spain that is not either on the one side farce, or on the other religious Mystery, is called, if only it fulfil the further conditions of being in three acts and in verse—he has many tragedies, which by their effectual working on the springs of passion assert their right to this serious name. Some of these might almost as fitly have been enumerated among his historic compositions. The Spanish drama moves too freely, too nearly resembles the spontaneous growths of nature, to admit any very rigorous classification. Like nature, it continually defies and breaks through all artificial arrangements of its productions, and one must often be content to class those under one head,

which might as well, or nearly as well, be classed under another. Still, as in some of these compositions the tragic, in others the historic element is predominant, they may be arranged, even while they partake of both, according to this predominance. Among the noblest in this kind is *Jealousy the Greatest Monster*; it is the story of Herod and Mariamne, but that with some very wide departures from the actual facts of history; and a genuine fate-drama, of rare grandeur both in the conception and execution; and not unworthy of the mighty criminal and the glorious woman with whose fortunes it has to do. The tragedies of a Spaniard writing for Spaniards, which should turn on jealousy, might beforehand be excepted to claim especial notice; and indeed Calderon has three or four dramas in this kind, of shuddering horror; in which the Spanish *pundonor* is pushed to its bloodiest excess; but the fearful power and immense effect of which it is impossible not to acknowledge. *The Physician of his own Honour*, a favourite some fifty years since on the stage at Vienna, is one of these; but less horrible, and perhaps therefore more terrible, is another, noticeable likewise as a very masterpiece of skilful construction, *For a Secret Wrong a Secret Revenge*, which is one of the very highest efforts of his genius. Hallam, not denying, but admitting freely, its rare impressiveness and power,

has yet called it 'an atrocious play;' but he seems to me to have missed the point which certainly mitigates its atrocity, namely, that the murdered wife is guilty so far, that she is only waiting the opportunity to be so.*

Another tragedy, but not of jealousy, *Love after Death*, is connected with the hopeless rising of the Moriscoes in the Alpujarras (1568—1570), one of whom is its hero. It is for many reasons worthy of note; among other as shewing how far Calderon could rise above national prejudices, and expend all the treasures of his genius in glorifying the heroic devotedness of a noble foe. It has some wonderfully effective scenes. Thus when Tuzani, the young Moorish hero, draws out from the Spanish soldier, unconscious that he is weaving his own doom, the story of the fair girl whom at the storming of a Moorish stronghold he slew, she being indeed the beloved and affianced of Tuzani, and when Tuzani, having contained himself thus far, now returns the fatal stroke, at the same time exclaiming, 'And was the blow like this?' we have an effect which reminds of one in *Cymbeline*, where Iachimo, confessing the wrong that he has done to Posthumus, exclaims, 'Methinks I see him now,' and is at once

* It is translated into French prose by Damas Hinard, *Chefs-d'œuvre du Théâtre Espagnol*, ii. 157–213; also by Latour, *Œuvres Dramatiques de Caldèron*, i. 69, sqq.; and excellently analysed and commented on by Phil. Chasles, *Etudes sur le Drame Espagnol*, 27–38.

taken up by the other who has listened so long, 'Ay, so thou dost, Italian fiend,' and one which must have been equal to this in the effect which it produced. Nor is this the only play in which Calderon seeks to do justice to the vanquished Moors, and to pay due honour to the chivalrous element in their character. In *The Mistress of Gomez Arias*, as it is called, he does not shrink from bringing into contrast with one another a Spanish cavalier, a Don Juan of the hatefullest type, who sounds the very depths of infamy and treacherous wrong-doing, and a Moorish rebel and revolter, who holds a fastness in the Alpujarras, and in whom there shines out a noble courtesy and a grand self-command. This play, founded on a popular Spanish ballad, is not the best, but it is among the best, which the poet has written. The scene in which this wretch sells to the Moors the girl whom he has betrayed, but of whom he has grown weary and who now stands in his way, despite her entreaties and reproaches, is, to my mind, of itself sufficient to decide the question whether the deepest springs of passion were his to open. It is nothing wonderful to read that on one occasion a poor Spanish alguazil, who was serving as guard of honour on the stage, drew his sword, and rushed among the actors, determined that an outrage such as that should not be committed before his eyes.

Seeing, too, that Calderon's world seems sometimes to consist too exclusively of the higher classes, and just such of the lower as minister immediately to their pleasures or necessities—the hearty homeliness of England's poets, as of Chaucer and Shakespeare, being only too rare with him, the Bateses and the Williamses of the latter being well-nigh unknown—* one must not pass over his noble but painful tragedy of humble life, *The Mayor of Zalamea.* Painful, I

* There are some very angry and depreciatory lines, not without a certain justification, by Frederick Rückert, in which he denounces Calderon on this score, as being a poet, not for men and women, but for gentlemen and ladies, and for those moving altogether in an artificial and fantastic world. But there are times too, though it were to be wished that they oftener recurred, when he too can be plain and homely with the best. I do not adduce what follows as a match for the shrewd wisdom which lives in the counsel of Polonius to his son; yet none, I think, can read this without being reminded of that, nor without acknowledging that this too was well and worthily said. It is the peasant magistrate of Zalamea who gives the following advice to his son, about to set out for the wars (I avail myself of Mr. Fitzgerald's version)—'By God's grace, boy, thou com'st of honourable if of humble stock; bear both in mind, so as neither to be daunted from trying to rise, nor puffed up so as to be sure to fall. How many have done away the memory of a defect by carrying themselves modestly; while others again have gotten a blemish only by being too proud of being born without one. There is a just humility that will maintain thine own dignity, and yet make thee insensible to many a rub that galls the proud spirit. Be courteous in thy manner, and liberal of thy purse; for 'tis the hand to the bonnet and in the pocket that make friends in this world; of whom to gain one good, all the gold the sun breeds in India, or the universal sea sucks down, were a cheap purchase. Speak no evil of women; I tell thee the meanest of them deserves our respect; for of women do not we all come? Quarrel with no one but with good cause; by

have called the play, in that, like Southey's *Roderick the Goth*, it turns on a crime so revolting as utterly to disqualify it from constituting the turning-point in a work of art—even as I must consider Shelley's *Cenci*, which adds a second moral horror to the first, to have, and in a far higher degree, the same disqualification. But this much granted, the power of the play is not to be denied, and as little its merits in several ways. We owe an admirable translation of it to Mr. Fitzgerald. The speech of Isabella, the humble Lucretia of this tragedy, as she mourns over her mighty wrong, he characterises as 'almost the most elevated and purely beautiful piece of Calderon's poetry he knows; a speech (the beginning of it) worthy the Greek Antigone.' Calderon has frequently been denied the faculty of drawing characters. Now that his characters are sometimes deficient in strong individual delineation is certainly true; but that it is not always so this tragedy sufficiently attests. Neither is it here the peasant judge alone who is distinctly marked; but almost every other of the *dramatis personæ* as well. In his parting words, addressed to the audience, the poet claims for this that it is 'a true

the Lord, over and over again, when I see masters and schools of arms among us I say to myself, "This is not the thing we want at all, *How to fight*, but *Why to fight*, that is the lesson we want to learn. And I verily believe if but one master of the *Why to fight* advertised among us, he would carry off all the scholars."'

story.' If it happened at all, it must have happened in the spring of 1581 when Philip II. was on his way to Portugal.*

To all these must be added his comedies in our sense of the word, themselves a world of infinite variety, but one in which I must not linger. Ulrici indeed says that in comedy was Calderon's *forte*; 'therein first his truly poetical genius unfolds its full strength.'† I cannot agree with him. These seem to me but the lighter play, as contrasted with the earnest toil, of his spirit. Moreover, while he was a consummate master in the comedy of situation, the vein of his comic dialogue is sometimes forced, and sometimes flows scantily enough. He does not deal always with humble life in perfect good faith; it is too often, as I have already hinted, a sort of parody of his high life, itself a high life below stairs. Their charm consists in the ideal grace and beauty in which they are steeped, the warm atmosphere of poetry and

* A good analysis of this play is to be found in Lewes's *Spanish Drama*, p. 244–51; and a hearty recognition, such as is rare with him, of its worth—a *chef d'œuvre* he calls it. Even Klein has no choice but to acknowledge its extraordinary merits, and can only take refuge in the assertion that it is too good for Calderon, and must have been the work of Lope de Vega—an assertion without a tittle of evidence in its favour. *The Mistress of Gomez Arias*, of which I spoke but now, he also allows to have rare excellences, and this without seeking to rob Calderon of the honour of it. He can find too something to admire in *The Constant Prince*; but these are exceptions.

† *Shakspeare und sein Verhältniss zu Calderon und Goethe* (Halle, 1839), p. 533.

romance which he succeeds in diffusing over them. I can only indicate a few of the most celebrated, as *The Fairy Lady*, which, under various shapes, has found a home in almost all lands; *The Gaoler of Himself*, a finished piece of comedy, just playing on the verge of tragedy; *The Loud Secret*, and *The Scarf and the Flower*. With all this, I would not at all deny that it is quite possible to get tired of his Don Felixes and Don Diegos, his Leonoras and Isabels, all of them with so little to distinguish them one from the other. Finally, we must add to these the *autos*, or religious Mysteries, of which there will be occasion to speak by and by, for they claim a separate consideration. Putting all together, we must confess that the reach and compass of that poetical world which Calderon sought to occupy, and much of which he did by victorious right make his own, was very far from a narrow one.

To speak now of some of the technical merits of Calderon in dealing with his subject, after which it may be time to consider other matters which lie less on the surface. We observe, then, in him, the completest mastery of his materials; all is laid out to the best advantage, all is calculated and weighed beforehand. There are no after thoughts, no changes of plan as the composition grew under his hand, out of which the conclusion suits ill with the beginning; but

as one perceives on a second reading, glimpses of the last, and preparations for it, appear very often from the very first. He holds all threads in his hand, and has already woven them in the loom of his thought before his outward activity begins. Vast as is the cycle of his compositions,—his secular dramas are more than one hundred and twenty, his *autos* more than seventy, being nearly two hundred in all, a number which would appear vaster still, if there were not Lope at hand with his fifteen hundred to make Calderon's fertility appear almost like barrenness,—there are nowhere in them any tokens of haste; all parts are fully and in the measure of their importance equably wrought out.* Inequalities of course there will be, for every poet will at one time soar with a higher wing than at another; but there are nowhere to be found the evidences of carelessness or haste. Several of his dramas, like more than one of Shakespeare's, have been laboriously re-cast and re-written, so that we possess them in two shapes, in their earlier and immaturer, in their later and riper forms. Thus, *The Tree of the Best Fruit* is a first sketch of *The Sibyl of the East.*

* In addition to his tragedies and comedies which have reached the after-world, Calderon is reported to have written one hundred *saynetes*, farces or interludes, not one of which has come to our hands; a long poem in *ottava rima* on the Last Things; another on the Deluge. Add to these some treatises in prose, one on the dignity of Painting, another in defence of the Drama.

Nor, numerous as his writings were, is it any way impossible that he should have bestowed on all his works that careful elaboration for which I have here given him credit. Almost all poets of a first-rate excellence, dramatic poets above all, have been nearly as remarkable for the quantity as the quality of their poetry; nor has the first injuriously affected the second. Witness the seventy dramas of Æschylus, the more than ninety of Euripides, the hundred and thirteen of Sophocles. And if we consider the few years during which Shakespeare wrote, his fruitfulness is not less extraordinary. The fact, indeed, is not so very hard to explain. It is not so much they that have spoken, as their nation that has spoken by them.

And, in the instance before us, we should not leave out of sight to how great an age the poet attained. His life, like that of Sophocles and of Goethe, was prolonged beyond its eightieth year. Nor only was his life a long one, but it was a life singularly free from all outward disturbances; in this most unlike those of his great fellow-countrymen, Lope and Cervantes. He did not write for his bread, as with all his popularity did the former; he was no shuttlecock of fortune, no wrestler with poverty as with an armed man, and that for barest life, as the immortal author of *Don Quixote*. It might have been better for him, if he had known some of these

conflicts ; or, perhaps, with his temperament, it might not. At all events, such struggles were not allotted to him. The generosity of the monarch whom he served, the large incomings of the preferments which he held, these, even supposing that high literature was no better rewarded in his case than in that of many others, must have exempted him from all anxieties about money ; indeed he appears to have had a considerable property to bequeath at his death; and his whole life, with the exception of his campaigns in the Milanese and in Flanders, which cannot have been lost time to him even in this respect, and his brief service in Catalonia, may very well have been dedicated entirely to the practice of his art.

Neither did he make for himself, as do so many to whom the perilous gifts of genius have been vouchsafed, those cares and disquietudes, from which he had been graciously exempted from without. No one can doubt that to him was given a cheerful spirit, working joyously, and with no doubts nor misgivings, in that sphere which it found marked out for it. Doubtless that which the Schlegels affirm was true in his respect ; the world's riddle was solved for him, and solved in the light of faith. The answer which he had found, and which he offers to others, may be quite unsatisfying to them ; it fully satisfied *him*.

No one can contemplate the noble portrait occasionally prefixed to his works, the countenance so calm, so clear, so resolved, surmounted with the dome-like expanse of that meditative forehead,* and not feel that to him, if to any, were given 'the *serene* temples of the wise.' And this lasted to the end; he was not of those too many poets, who only 'do begin their lives in gladness;' it was gladness with him to the end.

Then, further, in every estimate of Calderon's merits his infinite dramatic tact and skill—what in German they call 'Brettergerechtigkeit'—may well claim to be put prominently forward. Goethe continually recurs with admiration to the supreme knowledge of stage-effect which Calderon everywhere displayed, and in which he regards him as without an equal. To some indeed he is *only* a play-wright. Now play-wright no doubt he was, the most finished and accomplished probably that the world ever saw; understanding the mechanism of dramatic construction better than it has ever been understood by any other. It is no doubt in this sense, and having this merit in view, that Schiller has said of him, 'This poet would

* In a poem published immediately after his death, his eulogist celebrates, 'de su rostro grave lo capaz de la frente.' It is a countenance not without its resemblances to Shakespeare's, but wanting, and how great a want, every indication of his humour.

have saved Goethe and myself from many mistakes, if we had learned to know him earlier.' At the same time we should entirely wrong Calderon if we merely gave him credit for a power of stage-effect, and not for this as subservient to the higher interests of his art.

Let me illustrate by a single instance what I mean. I have already mentioned his *Locks of Absalom* as one of his finest plays founded on scriptural subjects. There is nothing in its kind grander than the scene in this, where Amnon is slain at the bidding of his brother Absalom. The marvellous skill with which this dreadful deed is prepared and brought about deserves recognition, and, with this, the very highest admiration. With the interval of time, two full years, which had elapsed between this murder and the crime which it avenges, the utter absence of all suspicion with which Amnon had accepted his brother's invitation, an inferior artist might, almost certainly would, have so brought about the catastrophe, as merely to revolt the spectators by what would have appeared as a cold-blooded fratricide. But Calderon, with rare skill, and in one of the noblest scenes which his theatre possesses, brings the spectator to the point at which he still feels that it is indeed evil punishing evil, the wicked being used as scourges of the wicked; but he is not so far removed from all sympathy with the deed as would altogether mar the effect.

The idyllic aspect of the whole scene of the sheep-shearing (see 2 Sam. xiii. 23), the pastoral quietness, the groups of simple shepherds and shepherdesses, form a contrast the most striking with the act of a terrible revenge which is presently to stain that green turf with blood. Tamar, ever since her mighty wrong, has lived in deepest seclusion in this country place of her brother's, 'desolate in her brother Absalom's house,' and moves like a dark shadow among the simple and joyous shepherdesses of the land ; for the sin of Amnon declares itself also in this, that it has turned her whole soul, who was once gentle and loving, to bitterness and hate and the lust of revenge. The royal youths are assembled ; they have brought with them the manners of the court, its freedom and its licence, and do not fail presently to make plain that they have done so. Teuca, an aged prophetess or hag, one hardly knows which, but in the secret of the blow which is about to fall, distributes different flowers to each—to Solomon, to Adonijah, to Absalom, to Amnon—to each with ambiguous words ; and in each case the flower, with the words which accompany it, and the answer which it calls out, have something prophetic of the future fortunes of the receiver. There is for each in all this an unconscious prophecy of his own doom. The whole forms a wonderful preparation for that which is about to be. The words, spoken at

random, but which yet shall prove most literally true, the irony of fate which unconsciously draws out from men's own lips the sentence of their doom, the first mutterings of those Divine judgments which shall presently break in thunder over their heads, not one of these is wanting.

Presently the banquet is announced, and the other guests go in. Amnon alone tarries behind. The same that he was of old, wanton and injurious, he has been taken with the shape and grace of one of these veiled shepherdesses, and is fain to make nearer acquaintance with her. Her replies to his advances are abrupt, yet full of mysterious allusions to what has been, to what shall so shortly be, to the past outrage, to the coming revenge. Does she refuse to unveil at his request?—he will force her thereto. He is very fond of force, she answers. At last he does forcibly remove her veil, and, perceiving that it is Tamar, rushes out as from a Medusa's face with horror and dismay. 'Ill beginning,' he exclaims, 'this banquet has had.' 'But it shall have a worse ending,' she replies. How marvellous the art in this way to reproduce the feeling of the original outrage in the spectators, to revive in strength the indignation against it which the long spaces of intervening time might else have weakened in great part. Amnon has scarcely gone out when one cry, and then another, is heard

within,—for mercy from Amnon, of triumphant vengeance, mingled with Tamar's name, from Absalom. It is but the work of a moment,—for no one knows better than Calderon when and where to precipitate the action,—and the scene opens; the injurious Amnon lies dead across the tables, with a bloody napkin thrown over him; Absalom stands triumphing above him; his sister takes her place by his side; while of the other guests some are flying in alarm for their lives, and others grouped in wildest confusion around. She had said in the moment of her agony, 'I will cry to heaven.' 'Heaven answers late,' he had scornfully replied. This was true, but though late it *had* answered still; for the mills of God, if they grind late, yet grind to powder. There are scenes in Calderon equal to this; I know of none in which his genius shines *more* gloriously forth.

When this poet wrote, that noble Castilian language, the stateliest of the daughters of the Latin, not clipped and cut short like the hungry French, which devours so many of its syllables, not emasculated like the Italian, nor eviscerated like the Portuguese, was in its prime, perhaps just beginning to decline from it. Of this glorious tongue there is no mightier master than he. There seems no bidding of his which it does not wait to fulfil; and he sometimes loves to display his mastery in it by *tours de force*,

which are executed by him seemingly with the most perfect ease, and which give no sign of the difficulty which must have attended their accomplishment. He did not indeed wield the language at all periods of his life with equal felicity. Rich, ornate, and decorated as his diction always is, if only there is anything to justify its being so, he did not in his youth altogether escape the *dulcia vitia* of the *estilo culto*, which at that time was the fashion; while in the works of his old age there is a certain re-appearance of early faults, and this without the fiery vigour of youth to excuse or conceal them. But take him at his best, and none can justly deny him this praise, namely, that in him the Spanish language as a language for the embodiment of poetic thought reached the highest perfection to which it ever attained.

Let us seek in other matters to measure out to him the praise or the blame which are fairly his, to avoid the extravagances in either of which not a few have been guilty. The wealth and prodigality of Calderon's imagery has been often extolled and admired; and with justice; while yet, wealthy and prodigal as he appears to be, and is, at the same time he is not quite *so* wealthy, nor yet of quite so reckless a prodigality, as might at first sight appear. The almond-tree that flowering too early is presently nipped by the envious cold; the silkworm that

weaves for itself at once a cradle and a tomb; the fountain of sweet water that, springing up too near the salt sea-wave, at once loses itself in it; the flowers which are the stars of earth, and stars which are the flowers of heaven, recur somewhat too often. He squanders in the confidence that what he scatters abroad will presently come back again to his hands; seeing that what he has once used, he will not therefore feel the slightest scruple in using a second time or a hundredth.

Nor does his repetition of himself confine itself to these matters merely external. His inner spiritual world, though a wide one, is not, like Shakespeare's, a universal one. It does not stretch itself in every direction till it loses itself in the infinite. On the contrary, it has limits, and those very fixed and rigid ones, beyond which it never extends. Certain factors, love, honour, religion, never fail to produce the same results, and this with so fixed a recurrence, that one sometimes begins to be afraid lest the whole matter should sink into a mechanical contrivance; being almost tempted in moments of displeasure to liken his poetry to the shifting combinations of the kaleidoscope, which, ever as you turn it, yields only what you had seen already, however it may yield this, brought into new and unlooked-for combinations. Thus when Goethe likens Calderon's plays to bullets or leaden

soldiers cast all in the same mould,* he expresses this particular fault, and by a comparison which sounds at first as though it were intended to be utterly contemptuous. It must not, however, be so taken; for Goethe had a sincere admiration for Calderon, although always with certain limitations, and setting himself against the extravagances of his German worshippers; of whom he complains that, instead of drinking in the spirit of Calderon, and nourishing themselves and their own art from his, they merely appropriated and reproduced his forms; or, as in another place he expresses it: 'Unhappily we Germans set his tender side in relation with our weak. Of his true strength there is still little apprehension among us.'† With this agree other utterances of his, wherein he shows, but always with full honour to the poet, his jealousy

* Riemer (*Mittheilungen über Goethe*, vol. ii. p. 648): 'Unendliche Productivität des Calderon, und Leichtigkeit des Gusses, wie wenn Mann Bleisoldaten oder Kugeln giesse.' Compare a letter of Tieck's in Solger's *Nachgelassene Schriften*, i. 683: 'Dieser Geist ist eine der sonderbarsten Erscheinungen: kaum eine Spur von der grossen Vernunft, die den Shakspeare so himmlisch und ächt human macht; nichts mehr von jener grossen Naivetät, die ich immer am Lope bewundern muss; aber dafür der durchgearbeitetste Manierist (im guten Sinn), den ich kenne.' Compare 696: 'Calderon ist ein vollendeter Manierist, und in seiner Manier gross und unverbesserlich.'

† Riemer (*Mittheilungen über Goethe*, vol. i. p. 649): 'Leider werden wir Deutsche eben seine zarte Seite mit unseren schwachen in Rapport setzen. Von seiner wahren Stärke ist noch wenig Begriff unter uns.

of the Calderomania which was the fashion in his time, his displeasure at the questionable influence which it was exercising on the dramatic art of his country.* Thus on one occasion he does not hesitate to express himself in the language following: 'How much of false Shakespeare, and still more Calderon, have brought upon us, the way in which these two great lights in the poetic heaven have become will-o'-the-wisps for us, it will be for the historian of literature in the future time to record.'†

But some, perhaps, who would allow to a poet the right to borrow freely from himself, and to repeat himself, would deny him the same liberty in respect of his neighbours. It must be confessed that Calderon often lays hands upon his neighbours' property; making large use of their labours who have gone before him, so large that this has been urged as a diminution of his own proper fame. He is, indeed, sometimes the rich man of Nathan's parable, who does not scruple to make the one ewe-lamb of a

* On this matter see Gervinus, *Gesch. der National. Literatur*, vol. v. p. 604.

† Goethe, *Sämmtliche Werke*, Paris, 1836, vol. v. p. 62. In the same place he ascribes to Calderon, 'das bis zum Unwahren gesteigerte Talent.' In his *Conversations with Eckermann*, he expresses himself thus: 'Calderon ist unendlich gross im Theatralischen und Technischen. . . . . Seine Stücke sind durchaus bretterrecht, es ist in ihnen kein Zug, der nicht für die beabsichtige Wirkung calculiert wäre. Calderon ist dasjenige Genie, was zugleich den grössten Verstand hatte.'

poorer neighbour his own; and the praise which has been bestowed upon him, namely, that he imitated nobody, is certainly very much misplaced. But against how many poets of the foremost rank might not the same charge be adduced? Chaucer uses Gower as if he had been a hewer of wood and drawer of water for him. Whatever Shakespeare found ready to his hand, and promising to serve his turn, he entered upon it as his own rightful possession. It is not the amount of his predecessors toils which a poet borrows, but the proportion which this holds to that which he has of his own, by which we must judge whether his position in the kingdom of art is hereby affected or not. He who knows that, if need were, he could produce as good, or better, out of his own resources, may enter fearlessly, and without diminution to his own honours, on the stored treasures of those who have gone before him. He has a great work to do; and all that will save him labour and time in the doing it is welcome, not to his indolence, nor to any desire in him to array himself in other men's garments, and adorn himself with other men's plumes; but welcome as giving him freer scope and larger room for his own exertion. He is a plagiary, who has borrowed but once, if that one borrowing constitutes the whole of his wealth, and that which, being withdrawn from him, would leave him nothing. He is no plagiary, who has appro-

priated a thousand times, if these appropriations are still in entire subordination to his own native wealth. What free use Milton makes of all which he had ever read; but yet it would not leave him perceptibly poorer, if this all were recovered from him. In this matter of entering upon other men's labours, the liberty among poets is permitted to the rich which is denied to the poor. That is pardonable in him that has, which is inexcusable in him that has not.

But this is not all. In truly creative periods of literature, when extensive regions are being added day by day to its empire, there are no such rigid and anxious lines of demarcation between mine and thine, as in more artificial and less genially productive epochs. It is not then as when every poet and poetaster counts that he has his own little domain of reputation to defend, his own little credit for originality to uphold. There is a large and liberal giving and taking, and this with leave or without leave, whereof it is difficult at other times to form a conception. Whatever has been already done is felt to be more the common property of all, than the single possession of anyone. The individual author falls out of sight in the general national mind of which he is the utterance and the voice. In that mind and from it he has found his inspiration, and whatever he has uttered belongs

more to all than to one. He has thrown it into the common stock; and henceforth it is there for others to employ, for as many, that is, as can justify their use, by improving upon it while they use. How little Calderon desired to conceal his obligations is shown very clearly by his often naming of his own play by the same name as that to which he was indebted the most. Thus his *Dancing Master* and his *Great Prince of Fez* are like-named to two plays of Lope.*

In another matter Calderon is less to be defended: I mean in a certain excess of the intellectual faculty in the disposition and carrying out of his plots. They are calculated overmuch; there is so accurate and premeditated a balancing of part against part, so fine and curious a dovetailing, that, ingenious as it ever, marvellous as it sometimes is, still there is felt to be too much in it of calculation, too little of passion. It has degenerated sometimes into that which almost looks like trick. The symmetrical is attained, but attained by means which lie too plainly on the surface; it is the symmetry of artifice, which betrays itself at once as such; and not the latent symmetry, which, lying so much deeper, will often look like confusion and disorder at the first. Strange as the assertion may sound, when compared to a frequent estimate of his poetical character, there are plays of Calderon

* See Schack, *Nachträge*, p. 82.

which remind one of nothing so much as of a Dutch garden, where every alley has its alley corresponding, and every tree is nodding to its brother. It is impossible, therefore, that Voltaire could have more entirely missed the mark than he has done when, writing of Calderon's drama, he has said, 'C'est la Nature abandonnée à elle-même;' words which are adopted in the article on Calderon in the *Biographie Universelle.* It would be difficult to give a judgment about him more absolutely contrary to the truth than this. There is seldom too much of nature in his plays, but often too little.

It was not, indeed, possible for him, arriving as he did at the latter end of a mighty burst of poetry, to be other than a self-conscious poet. This burst of poetry had now lasted so long, had produced so many poetical masterpieces inviting study, had enjoyed such ample time for reflecting upon itself, and upon the means by which its effects were brought about, that self-consciousness had become inevitable. Of many a mighty artist it is difficult to think that *he* knew, however *his genius* may have known, the methods by which his most glorious successes were obtained. One cannot believe this for a moment about Calderon. He knew them, and, as is sometimes plain, he knew them only too well. In fact, he not merely concluded an era; but it would scarcely be too much to affirm

that he hastened its conclusion; leaving, as he did, so little which was possible for those who came after him to do. Every device and resource of his art, moral and material, had been pushed by him as far as it would go, had attained its very utmost limits. The rose of dramatic art in him was full blown, so near being over-blown, that there remained nothing for its leaves but to fall. Coming, as Calderon did, after so many mighty masters in his art, his poetry in the sum total of the effect which it produced can be likened to nothing so well as to the winding-up of a grand exhibition of fireworks; which, having lasted long, concludes with an explosion so brilliant, so marvellous in its novelty, variety, and beauty, as to cast all which had gone before into the shade, and, at the same time, apparently to leave hopeless any rivalry for the future. The spectators, at once dazzled and delighted, rise from their seats. Darkness may now cover all. There is no more in this line of things that will or can be seen.

It would be unjust to Calderon to affirm that he corrupted the taste of his fellow-countrymen; but still he had accustomed them to so rich and gorgeous a gratification at once of eye and ear, that such as came after found these two alternatives before them, in each of which the certainty of failure was for them equally bound up. Either, conscious of the inferiority of their genius, they might creep near the

ground with low and timid flight—a course which the high-raised expectations of that world for which they wrote would not now endure; or else they might attempt to emulate his flight, when they became ridiculous, attempting that which only such genius as his could justify or carry through, their waxen wings betraying them to a miserable doom so soon as they endeavoured to soar into that empyrean region where he had securely held his way. They chose for the most part this, the more ambitious course, but one in which their failure was only the more signal. It has been well observed, 'His popularity hastened the fall of the drama, by quickening a vulgar appetite for the pleasures of the eye, and his example brought into vogue a class of pieces written for scene-painters and machinists which reached the height of absurdity in the pieces of Salvo and Ocampo a few years afterwards. On the whole, the genius, modified by the fortune of Calderon, has been truly said to have given the drama the last advance of which it was capable, but at the same time to have placed it, by the means taken to this end, on a summit from which nothing but descent was possible in any direction.'* 'The poet stands,' as Goethe has significantly observed, 'on the threshold of over-culture.'†

* *Athenæum*, Nov. 26, 1853.

† Der Dichter steht an der Schwelle der Uebercultur.

Nor can it be denied that we may sometimes trace in his works injurious influences which reach him from that peculiar sphere in which he moved. We recognise the court-poet, the poet of the Buen Retiro; nor does he always escape the dangers to which thus he is exposed. He had strength enough, it is true, to resist in the main the narrowing tendencies which such a position, and the necessity of often preparing what would be acceptable to his royal and courtly hearers there, might easily have exerted upon him; nor does he desert seriously, nor for long, the broad popular basis on which alone a national drama can repose.* And moreover that same familiarity with courts, and the life of courts, brought a certain compensation with it. How complete the self-possession of all his characters to whom this accomplishment would naturally belong. With what graceful ease, with what high-bred courtesy, they know ever how to say the right thing at the right time. What perfect gentlemen his youthful gallants are in their friendships, their quarrels, and their love-makings. It is Calderon contemplated from this point of view to whom we must regard the graceful

Goethe (*Werke*, Paris, 1836, vol. iii. p. 316): Eine völlige Gleichstellung mit dem spanischen Theater kann ich nirgends billigen. Der herrliche Calderon hat so viel Conventionelles, dass einem redlichen Beobachter schwer wird, das grosse Talent des Dichters durch die Theateretiquette durchzuerkennen.

lines of Lowell, the American poet, addressed. They are too happy to leave unquoted:

> 'O music of all moods and climes,
> Vengeful, forgiving, sensuous, saintly,
> Where still between the Christian chimes
> The Moorish cymbal tinkles faintly.
>
> O life borne lightly in the hand,
> For friend or foe with grace Castilian,
> O valley safe in Fancy's land,
> Not tramped to mud yet by the million.
>
> Bird of to-day, thy songs are stale
> To his, my singer of all weathers,
> My Calderon, my nightingale,
> My Arab soul in Spanish feathers.'

The injurious consequences just referred to of the position which he occupied are seen in his occasional choice of subjects, which evidently attracted him, not on account of their inward poetic worth, nor of any strong sympathy of his genius with them, but only or chiefly because of the ample room and opportunity for pompous spectacle and show which they afforded. In search of these the poet sometimes a little wanders out of the true paths of a severer art, and consents to minister rather to the sense than to the spirit. The Court demanded splendid festal pieces, such as should give room for startling effects, unlooked-for transformations, long-drawn and magnificent processions, and he did not refuse to produce them. Yet I fancy that he sometimes laboured here with no willing mind. In

some of these, above all in some of his gorgeous mythological pieces, it will be evident, I think, to a close observer, that he wrought against the grain, that he felt his bondage, and found vent for a latent displeasure in a certain irony with which he treats his whole argument. The assumption of this ironical position in respect of his theme is at other times wholly alien from him.

In these pompous shows Calderon had, and plainly felt that he had, the resources of the royal purse on which he might freely draw. The lengthened stage directions which in several cases accompany his grand spectacle plays are most curious. They evidently proceed from the poet's own hand, and involve the most elaborate and complicated arrangements. A famous Italian machinist, Cosmo Lotti by name, presided over this department; and the demands which were made upon him may well have tasked his skill to the uttermost.* The cost of adequately producing some of these scenic splendours must have been enormous. But, in truth, the prodigal expenditure of the court of Philip IV. upon its pride and its pleasures seems to have known no stint and no limits. One might suppose that it would have sometimes been a

* Hartzenbusch, in his edition of Calderon (1851), the best we have, but leaving ample room for a better, reprints one of these curious documents in full (vol. ii. p. 386).

little restrained by a sense of shame. But no: the whole machine of the State might be in danger of standing still, or breaking up, for lack of the most necessary funds; armies in the Netherlands, long unpaid, might be in actual revolt, holding fenced cities in pledge for the payment of their arrears, threatening to turn, or indeed actually turning, their arms against their employers; but the magnificent and ruinous splendours of the court appear never to have known diminution or abatement.

Outside, indeed, of the court, there was no such splendid getting-up of the Spanish play. Of the many travellers in Spain—English, French, and Dutch—during the seventeenth century, hardly one fails to express his astonishment at the poverty, meanness, and nakedness of the whole outward presentation of it—that is, wherever there was not the royal purse on which to draw, and the ample boards of the royal theatre at Buen Retiro on which the gorgeous piece might unfold itself at full. This beggarly suppliance of all furniture and decorations may have indicated no more than that the poverty which was at that time everywhere else making itself felt through the land, was doing the same in this region as well. But even if it had not this explanation, if the poverty of the stage had been exceptional, this would argue nothing against the passion of the people for this form of

entertainment, would wholly fail to prove that the hearts of the people had ceased to be moved by it.

It may sound at first hearing as a paradox, but it is true not the less, that where there is on the part of any people a passionate love of their drama, and of the representation of it on the stage, there generally goes along with this an absolute indifference upon their parts to the ordinary illusions of costume and scenery. They to whom the play is a genuine birth, find all necessary illusion for themselves. They transport themselves—they do not ask others by laborious devices to transport them—to their Thebes or their Athens, to whatever spot they would fain in imagination be. What a glimpse we have in the *Prologue* to Shakespeare's *Henry V.* of our English poet's indifference—an indifference as we cannot doubt shared by his audience—to the imperfections which cleaved to the whole scenic setting forth of his glorious play. And the converse also of this is true. There is no surer token of a dramatic literature which, as acted drama, has ceased to take any mighty hold on a people, than the fact that it should be necessary by costly accessories of dress and scenery to quicken the languid interest of the spectators in that which has ceased by any inherent spell and power of its own to stir their hearts and imaginations any more.

But to return. Now and then, in some of these

courtly pieces of which I spoke but now, the poet glorifies his royal patron beyond the warrant of the truth. Yet here it will be only just to remember that in many accomplishments Philip IV. *was* eminent. What his merits as a poet were may be doubtful; but he certainly wrote his own language purely and well; he possessed no contemptible skill in painting; he was a graceful rider, was bold and fearless in the chase. Thus, a very long and gorgeous passage occurs in *The Scarf and the Flower*, in which, after a magnificent description of the horse, the poet extols the horsemanship, of the King, and claims for him the honour due to the best and boldest rider of his time. This might seem a piece of egregious flattery; but when Calderon, anticipating this charge of adulation, puts it at the same time somewhat proudly from him, on the ground that in nothing he exceeded the truth,* he is quite borne out in this by contemporary authority. To appeal to the many equestrian pictures of Philip by Velasquez, in which he and his steed so well become one another, might not of itself be sufficient; for the pencil of the painter might have flattered as well as the pen of the poet; but 'we have it on the authority of the distinguished master of equitation,

Que como este afecto sea
Verdad en mi, y no lisonja,
No importa que lo parezca.

the Duke of Newcastle, that he was absolutely the best horseman in all Spain;'* while his skill and daring in the chase are in like measure raised above all doubt. Great, however, or at all approaching to greatness, he was not; and when some flatterers applied this title to him, they laid themselves open to the retort that such he was only in the greatness of the losses which Spain, while he swayed its sceptre, endured.

Calderon is, and probably will remain, the last first-class poet of the Roman Catholic faith. Saying this, I would not in the least imply that there have not been since his time poets of undoubted mark, who have been serious and earnest in their allegiance to the Church of Rome; Filicaja and Manzoni would refute me, if I made any assertion of the kind. As little would I venture to affirm that there may not be such again. But Calderon, I am persuaded, is the last great poet who will have found in the Roman Catholic as distinguished from—and, alas! sometimes as contrasted with—the universally Christian, to any appreciable degree, the motive power of his poetry; who so believes in and lives by this, that he shall be able in return to shed around it the glories of his own art. There will be abundance of ostentatiously Romanist art, poetical and other. There will be

* Stirling, *Velasquez and his Works*, p. 85, who refers to the treatise of the Duke, *A new Method to dress Horses*, &c., p. 8.

many a scornful challenge—'See what we can believe —how much more than you, poor unbelieving Protestants; what sources of inspiration are open to us, which are for ever closed to you!' But that which the challengers produce will not for a moment impose on the discerning; and the artist—poet or painter, or what else he may be—at bottom as incredulous, though he may not know it, about his legend or his miracle as those whom he affects to despise, will be rewarded with hearers or spectators as incredulous as himself. But saying this of Calderon, I would not be understood to imply that his inspirations were predominantly Roman as distinguished from Christian. Whatever universally Christian is in him or in any other is for all time; and this, despite of all that Southey, Sismondi, and others have affirmed to the contrary, so far in him exceeds the distinctively Roman Catholic, that he will, I feel sure, hold his ground and maintain his place in the august synod of the great 'heirs of memory,' whose reputation is for all time: nay, at each reconsideration of his claims, he is likely, on the whole, to take a higher, and not a lower, place than that which was assigned to him before. If on some points the orb of his fame must decrease, it will increase on others.

On some, it is true, it must decrease; he already suffers, and as the great stream of faith and passion

recedes further from Rome will suffer still more, from having committed himself so far to that which will every day be more plainly overlived; and will by more be abandoned. There will thus be the need in reading him of large abatements and allowances. Besides all of his which will remain the object of passionate admiration, there will be that wherein an ever larger number of readers will sympathise coldly; there will be that wherein they will sympathise not at all; there will be that against which their whole moral soul and being will protest and revolt.* The charge of antinomianism has been brought against some of our Reformers. Whether words incautiously uttered or inadequately guarded may have given some colour to

* They are severe words with which Lange, himself a sincere admirer, almost an enthusiastic one, concludes a study of Calderon, his merits and his faults, which may be found in Herzog's *Encyclopædia*, s. v. 'Kalderon;' but they have their measure of truth, and are worth being quoted, however one may think, as many will, that the writer accentuates his faults unduly, and even to injustice. They are as follows: 'Unserem Dichter hat das potenzirte spanische Mittelalter des 17. Jahrhunderts unsäglich geschadet. Ein ursprünglich inniges, frommes Gefühl, eine reiche Phantasie, ein zarter festlicher Natursinn, ein köstlicher heiterer Witz, ein schöner Verein von strengem Ernst und schalkischem Humor blickt uns aus der schweren romantischen Verpuzzung an, freilich mehr rührend als erhebend, denn der priesterliche Dichter gibt uns keine Zeugnisse von prophetischem höherem Beruf; er blieb gefesselt von dem unheimlichen Weltglanz seiner Zeit und des spanischen Hofes zur Zeit Philipps IV. selbst. Und daher gibt es wohl auch noch eine höhere Romantik als diejenige, welche man in Kalderon in der vollendetsten Weise repräsentirt sieht.'

the charge, I do not pause to enquire; but if it be a true one, we have here a signal illustration of the proverb, 'Extremes meet.' Assuredly Calderon's *Devotion of the Cross*, a very famous and, despite of all its perversity, a wonderful and terrible drama, is the very sublime of antinomianism.* Its hero, Eusebio, after various disorders, takes to the mountains, becomes in the end a robber, a murderer, and a would-be ravisher. He has never, however, amid all his crimes, renounced his devotion to the Cross, nor yet his confidence that on the ground of this he shall ultimately be saved, as accordingly in the end he is,† although, having died in his sins, slain in one of his wicked enterprises, it needs that he should be recalled by miracle to life, that so he may be partaker of the grace which his faithful service of the Cross had earned.

A thoughtful student of the fortunes of humanity, past and future, must, I think, be often deeply struck with the immeasurable advantage for being the poet of humanity, of all ages and all people, which Shake-

* With this Tirso de Molina's *El Condenado por Desconfiado* deserves to be compared. There is an interesting analysis of this very remarkable play in Schack's *Gesch. d. Dramat. Literatur in Spanien*, vol. ii. p. 602–606.

† It must not be supposed that Eusebios belong merely to the region of imagination. Fowell Buxton (see his *Memoirs*, 1848, p. 488) visited in the prisons of Civita Vecchia a famous Italian bandit, Gasparoni, who, having committed two hundred murders, had yet never committed one upon a Friday.

speare in being a child of the Reformation possessed. At the first blush of the matter there is a temptation to come to exactly the opposite conclusion; to regard him as at a disadvantage, shut out, as he thus was, from the rich mythology, the gorgeous symbolism, the manifold legend, and from many other sources of interest which a poet of the Roman Catholic Church would command. But whatever losses might thereby be his, whatever springs and sources of poetry might be closed to him on this account, all this was countervailed by far larger gains. And if the loftiest poetry is not merely passion and imagination, but these moving in the sphere of highest truth, it could not have been otherwise. The fact of these gains will every day be more evident. For thus nothing in him through the course of time becomes incredible, nothing is overlived. The tides of human faith and passion, which upbear so proudly the rich argosies that he has launched upon them, will never ebb, and leave their freight helplessly stranded on an abandoned shore, but will rather mount higher and higher still. Assuredly it is a weakness in Schiller, and one fitly rebuked in one of Mrs. Browning's noblest poems, that he should wail over the vanished 'Gods of Hellas,' as though the extinction of faith in them through the coming in of a higher and better faith had eft the world poorer in the materials of poetry

than before. To regard the matter only from a poet's point of view, what can be so poetical as highest truth and reason? If poetry is more and better than a brainsick dream, to bewail the vanishing of aught which, even while we bewail, we know to have been wholly or partially untrue, and to have been superseded by something worthier, is contradictory and idle. Are we not bound by every obligation to believe that, however appearances may seem otherwise, however severe or stern, or even homely, the true may show for a while, this will yet in the end prove the most beautiful, and therefore the most poetical, of all? That word of an English poet, 'Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty,' may not have yet come true through the whole domain of things, material, moral and spiritual, but it will come true at the last.

A comparison has been sometimes instituted between Calderon and Shakespeare, by friends of Calderon and by enemies—the friends as injudicious as the enemies unjust. Why cannot he be taken on his own merits? Why thrust him into a comparison and competition from which not he only, but every man must suffer? Why cannot a rich ornamental garden be beautiful, even though a magnificent landscape be more beautiful still? With what reason can be demanded from Calderon that which the clear unclouded South, which a Romance language, which

the Roman Catholic religion can never give? Nationality, language, faith, made him very different; and the same causes which have made the North of Europe the seat of the Reformation, the seat also of all the stronger thinking as well as the more earnest doing of modern Europe, have contributed to make our English poet far greater than the Spanish; our first immeasurably in advance of theirs. But set him beside any other of our Elizabethan dramatists, and although his merits and theirs are so disparate as scarcely to allow of comparison, yet if any comparison were made, he certainly would not suffer by it.

In one thing I cannot help noting the immense superiority of Calderon not merely over them, but the advantage which he has even over Shakespeare himself; who is an offender, though a very slight one as compared with his English contemporaries, in the point to which I refer. It is the entire absence of grossness, of indecency, of *double entendre* from his plays. The morality which he inculcates may sometimes be questionable or more than questionable, but in this matter he is nearly or quite without reproach. The wit of his valets and waiting-women may be sometimes forced and insipid enough, but, so far as my knowledge reaches, he never seeks to spice it with indecency.* Speeches which, considering who they

* See some excellent remarks on this subject in an able article on Calderon in *Blackwood's Magazine*, Dec. 1839, p. 729.

are that utter them, what lovely and pure-minded women, surprise us more than once in Shakespeare almost as much as the red mouse leaping out of the fair girl's mouth surprised Faust, nowhere occur in him. It is honourable to a Spanish audience that they did not *demand* this unworthy condiment, as is sufficiently attested by Calderon's immense popularity; that they could *bear* it, the plays of Tirso de Molina abundantly prove; though in him, too, it is rather the situations which are questionable than the words. As one recognises this fact, with what shame and humiliation must one think of all which a Beaumont and Fletcher, a Dryden, and many more, could endure to write, and an English audience to hear and to applaud.

It is only in consistency with the profounder thoughtfulness, the more introverted eye of the great English dramatist, that in him the action is subservient to the character, while in Calderon the character is subservient to the action. In Shakespeare you are more concerned with what his people *are*, in Calderon with what they *do*. Of course this is not to be pushed on either side too far; Shakespeare often interests with his plots; to Calderon was by no means denied the power of drawing characters. Of the drama of Shakespeare it has been said, 'The soul of man is the subject of its delineation; the action and the circum-

stances of the piece are entirely subordinate and subservient to the displaying of the passions and affections of the persons represented. The interest of the piece, though sometimes most skilfully maintained, is nevertheless a secondary object.' When the same writer* goes on to say, 'In the Spanish theatre it is exactly the reverse; the interest is everything, the characters comparatively are nothing,' this, having its truth, is yet too strongly and too broadly put.

In Shakespeare, again, where everything is wonderful, there is yet perhaps nothing *more* wonderful than the way in which characters grow before our eyes, as the action of the story proceeds. It is not merely that he gradually shows us more fully, and from more various points of view, what they are; but with the advance of the action his persons *are* different from what they were when it commenced; they are in process of *becoming*. As in actual life no character stands still, but all are changing, are waxing either worse or better, so it is in the mimic life of his stage. We note, for instance, in his plays which have to do with our Wars of the Roses, the English barons growing worse and worse, more unscrupulous, more cruel, more treacherous, more vindictive at every step; the poet thus unobtrusively showing the hideous moral effects of such wars upon those who are engaged in

* *Quarterly Review*, vol. xxv. p. 3, 'The Spanish Drama.'

them. Or again, in the same plays, we see in Margaret of Anjou the forward flirt passing into the unfaithful wife, and the unfaithful wife into the cursing hag. But then, too, if these, missing the true discipline of life, grow worse and worse by all which they pass through, we have others who, under the same discipline and in the same school of trial, wax nobler, leave behind them much of slight and frivolous, look face to face at the meaning of life and the higher ends for which it was given. What a grand example have we of this in the Falconbridge of *King John!*—what a moral growth there has been in him between the first act and the fifth! Calderon is not wholly without something analogous to this—a ripening of character under conditions favourable to such a growth; but there is comparatively little of it in him. Goethe has observed as much: in Calderon, he says, you have the hands of the clock as they are seen upon the dial-plate, but in Shakespeare all the inner works as well. Or more exactly to this point he has observed, in a piece of criticism on the Spanish poet, which, brief as it is, is the profoundest and most satisfying that has yet been written—'In Calderon,' he has said, 'you have the wine as the last artificial result of the grape, but expressed into the goblet, highly spiced and sweetened, and so given you to drink; but in Shakespeare you have the whole natural process of its

ripening besides, and the grapes themselves one by one for your enjoyment if you will.'*

I must not leave the points of contact or opposition between Shakespeare's drama and Calderon's, without a word or two on the names which they severally have given to their plays. It is not a great matter, nor yet altogether a small one, by what names a poet designates his productions; and it cannot be but that many must have admired the poetical, the witty, the proverbial, the alliterative, the antithetic character of the titles of so many among Shakespeare's plays, no less than the music with which they often haunt the ear; thus, *A Midsummer Night's Dream—All's Well that ends Well—Love's Labour's Lost—Measure for Measure*—the name itself being no unworthy herald of that which is to follow, and oftentimes summing it all up; and though not revealing beforehand, yet afterwards clearly declaring the intentions of the poet. Calderon also is singularly felicitous in his titles, and in them often reminds one of Shake-

* 'Shakspeare reicht uns die volle reife Traube vom Stock, wir mögen sie nun beliebig Beere für Beere geniessen, sie auspressen, keltern, als Most, als gegohrnen Wein kosten oder schlürfen, auf jede Weise sind wir erquickt. Bei Calderon dagegen ist dem Zuschauer, dessen Wahl und Wollen nichts überlassen; wir empfangen abgezogenen, höchst rectificirten Weingeist, mit manchen Spezereien geschärft, mit Sussigkeiten gemildert; wir müssen den Trank einnehmen, wie er ist, als schmackhaftes köstliches Reizmittel, oder ihn abweisen.' Goethe is here reviewing a German translation of *The Daughter of the Air* (*Werke*, Paris, 1836, v. 61).

speare; these almost always possess a point; in their narrow compass poetry and wit and proverb and antithesis all by turns find room. They attract the reader, and rouse his curiosity,* containing oftentimes the true key to the poet's intention. Let me adduce the following in proof:—*Life's a Dream—The Two Lovers of Heaven—The Fairy Lady—The Loud Secret—To-morrow is a New Day—Weep, Woman, and Conquer—Beware of Still Waters—White Hands cannot Hurt—The Worse is not always True—Loved and Hated—The Physician of his own Honour—The Gaoler of Himself—Everyone for Himself—First of all my Lady—The Poor Man is all Plots*,—and it is the same with a vast number of others.

There are still the poet's *autos* whereof to speak.

* On the titles of Calderon's plays, as well as on other matters connected with the subject, there are some good observations in a little essay by Heiberg, *De Poëseos dramaticæ genere Hispanico, præsertim de Calderone Dissert. Inauguralis*, Hafniæ, 1817, p. 16.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE GENIUS OF CALDERON.

(HIS AUTOS.)

I HAVE spoken more than once of the admiration of Augustus Schlegel for Calderon. While he extends this admiration to all his works, he has reserved his most enthusiastic praise, the loftiest flights of his most passionate eloquence, for the setting forth the glories of his *autos*. In these he sees, and perhaps justly, the most signal evidences of the poet's genius, his truest title-deeds to immortality,* herein forming a different estimate of their worth from that of a *Quarterly Reviewer*,† who writes, 'We shall dismiss the *autos* entirely from our consideration'—as unworthy,

* Martin Panzano, an Aragonese priest settled in Italy, who about the middle of the last century wrote a brief work in defence of Spanish literature, which he thought unduly depreciated abroad, has expressed himself in the same language. Speaking of Calderon, he says (*De Hispanorum Literaturâ*, Turin, 1758, p. 75): 'Certe inter primi subsellii poëtas clarissimum hunc virum adnumerandum, nemo unus qui ejus libros legerit inficiabitur; præsertim si acta quæ vulgo *sacramentalia* vocantur diligenter examinet; in quibus neque in inveniendo acumen, nec in disponendo ratio, neque in ornando aut venustas, aut nitor, aut majestas desiderabitur.'

† Vol. xxv. p. 21.

that is, of being taken into estimate and account. The passage, which occurs in the *Dramatic Lectures*, has been often and justly admired ; although it must be confessed that, despite of all the pomp and magnificence of words which he casts over his theme, the reader not otherwise instructed rises up having learned exceedingly little of what these are, or what in them deserves the praise which sounds to him so extravagant.

*Auto*, or 'Act,' was a name given at the first to almost any kind of dramatic composition ; but in the flourishing period of the Spanish drama was restricted to religious compositions ; nor would it be given to all of these, but only to representations in which allegorical persons appeared, and which were acted on certain chief festivals of the Church. Like every other form of drama which Calderon made his own, it was already, when he arose, a national production, and one deeply rooted in the affections of Spaniards, as a Christian, and still more as a Roman Catholic, people. He only carried to its highest perfection, and gave its crowning development to, a form of composition which had existed, though certainly in shapes very different from those which it assumed under his hands, almost as long as modern Spain had any literature whatever. For with all its complex construction, it is yet legitimately descended from the rude medieval Mysteries ;

sacred shows, in which, on certain great festivals of the Church, it was sought to teach the people through their eyes as well as through their ears the leading facts of Scripture history, above all of the life of Christ and of his saints. 'Miracle plays' these were commonly called with us, and sometimes 'Mysteries'—a name borrowed from the French, and on which there will be presently occasion to speak, being in modern times generally supposed, but erroneously,* to have been given to them because they set forth the chief *mysteries* of the faith.

We have indeed in these rude religious entertainments the germs of the modern drama; for, strange as it may sound to some, it is yet certain that the whole modern drama, not in Spain only, but throughout all Europe, grew up under the wing of the Church, and only gradually detached itself from it.† Like the Greek drama, it was religious, and part of a religious service, at its commencement. The process of this its detachment is not very difficult to trace. At the first, the Church had availed herself gladly of that love of dramatic representation which is so marked a characteristic of almost all nations at certain epochs of their intellectual and social development—until,

* See p. 90.

† On this matter see Alt, *Theater und Kirche in ihrem gegenseitigen Verhältniss historisch dargestellt*, 8vo, Berlin, 1846; and in Herzog's *Real Encycl.*, the art. *Geistliche Dramen.*

that is, it is killed, or rather its place supplied, by the abundance of books, and the widely diffused power of reading. With rude and ignorant populations, needing to be instructed in the main facts of sacred history, inaccessible through books, craving excitements in the place of those with which their heathen religions once supplied them, needing to be weaned, if possible, from profane feasts and songs and dances by better entertainments, she did not disdain to avail herself of the help which in this quarter she found. The thing grew up indeed, almost before she was aware, out of the desire vividly to set forth the great truths by which she was animated, the great facts of which she was the bearer. It is not too much to say that in the responses and antiphonies of her service, in the processions within the church and outside of it, in the change of persons and dresses during the service, in the alternation of the recitative (*dicere*) and the choir (*cantare*), in the scenic imitations of the cradle and all its accompaniments at Bethlehem, in this and much else of the same kind there lay already the fruitful germs of the drama which should be.*

It is no place here to follow out the steps by which these germs were gradually unfolded, nor yet to trace

* See a very interesting description of what these Mysteries must have been, and how they must have affected the spectators, in Milman's *Latin Christianity*, vol. vi. p. 492–495.

the further steps by which, as was inevitable, various scandals and offences arose, which might well create a misgiving in respect of the prudence of allowing all this to proceed any further. These sacred representations, begun in good faith and in simplicity, and as veritable *Biblia Pauperum* for a rude and ignorant people, after a while degenerated more and more into mere shows and spectacles, no helpers but hinderers to devotion; they were attended with a thousand inconveniences and unseemlinesses, as in the fact that the priests were at once the authors and actors,* churches and cathedrals the places of representation; and nowhere were they more fruitful of scandals than in Spain. The people who flocked to witness these spectacles after awhile craved coarser excitements, and there were not wanting those who were willing to pro-

* Though the word 'mystery' is spelt as though it were connected with *mysterium* and μυστήριον, we can hardly doubt that we derived the word, at least in this application, from the French, and that in the French it is more accurately spelt *mistère* than *mystère*, being derived from *ministerium*, and having its name because the officials of the Church—the *ministri* Ecclesiæ—conducted it. When at a later period these representations were employed, not merely for setting out the *facts* of the sacred history, but, by aid of allegorical personages, the *mysteries* of Christian theology, nothing lay nearer than to make the name significant of the intention, and to suppose that it was meant to be so. It is the same process of modifying the spelling, or even the shape, of a word under a wrongly assumed etymology, which has occurred innumerable times, being one of the most potent forces in the transformation of words. (See Littré, s. v. *Mystère.*)

vide for them these. Scurrile jests, profane songs, low buffooneries, forced their way into these compositions, and were often mixed up in the strangest manner with the very most sacred things of all. Thus in the evangelical history itself, the merchant who sold the spices to the holy women, the gardener for whom our blessed Lord was mistaken by the Magdalene, the host of the inn at Emmaus, all became fixed comic characters, and made untimely merriment for the spectators.

Many Church rulers—among these Innocent III. deserves honourable mention—were very much in earnest that these scandals should cease. Council after Council took the matter in hand, some absolutely prohibiting these spectacles, others giving to them a limited toleration, and attempting to define exactly what kind of representations should be allowed within the sacred walls, and what forbidden. These limitations were eluded; things invariably returned presently to their old course; and thus toward the end of the sixteenth century, in 1565, it was in Spain found necessary definitively to prohibit clerics taking any share in these religious plays, or allowing them to go forward within the sacred precincts. A way was found, however, by which the people should not be absolutely deprived of what they so eagerly craved. A compromise was effected. The Mysteries should

still continue, but not any more conducted by the immediate servants of the Church, nor within the sacred walls, nor as a part of Divine service; while yet, at the same time, the Church did not disown them altogether, nor quite cut off their connexion with herself. These plays still maintained their relation to certain high festivals; they were still performed at the bidding, and with the sanction, of the ecclesiastical authorities—these also defraying their cost. Of the secular drama I am not speaking now; that went its own way, independent of the Church, sometimes in opposition to and opposed by it—as in Spain, where more than once all dramatic representations, except directly religious, were suspended for a considerable period; but I speak of the religious, which thus was still related,* though the bands which bound it were somewhat relaxed, to the Church.

Lope de Vega took possession of this, as he did of every other form of national poetry, cultivating and

* A curious result and evidence of this was that the *autos*, though acted in the broad daylight, and indeed in the open air, were always accompanied in the representation by an innumerable quantity of wax tapers. Thus in the inimitable *Travels into Spain*, by the Countess d'Aulnoy, which are for Spain in the latter half of the seventeenth century what Ford and Barrow are for Spain in the nineteenth, describing her attendance at one of these, she says: 'It was an odd sight to see a prodigious number of flamboys lighted, whilst the sunbeams were ready to scorch you to death, and melted the very wax of which they were made.'

carrying it to a far higher point than that at which he found it. He did much for it, but he left much also for his successors, Calderon above all, to do. The *auto*, as conceived and carried out by him, fell very short in completeness, in depth, and in beauty of that which in Calderon's hands it afterwards became. This last found in the distinctly religious drama that which met all the requirements of his soul. We have evidence that after he had taken holy orders, he was for some while exercised with serious misgivings in respect of his position as a secular poet writing for the stage; that he was visited with many doubts whether he should not renounce this task altogether, and restrict for the future his poetical activity to the preparation of spiritual dramas, in the immediate service of the Church. He did not do so. Having referred the whole matter to his ecclesiastical superiors, he received no encouragement from them to entertain or to yield to these scruples. But for all this there cannot be any doubt that henceforward his chief delight lay in the preparation of his *autos*, and that in them he found himself most completely in his proper vocation. Here indeed, at length, his two vocations of dramatist and priest were reconciled in highest and most harmonious atonement; and from the finished excellence of these works in all their details, he appears to have dedicated to them his utmost care,

to have elaborated them with the diligence of a peculiar love. It ought to be mentioned that long before his time the 'Mystery' or 'miracle play' had in part given way to, had in part been blended with, the 'Morality,' which, rising later, had unfolded itself out of the Mystery; but which differed from it in this respect, that while the other had always to do with actual persons of sacred or legendary history, in the Morality allegorical persons, virtues, vices, and the like, appear on the scene, sometimes mingling with actual historic persons, in which case the composition shares in the nature of both, sometimes to the entire exclusion of such, in which case we have a Morality pure and unmixed.

As a work of art, the Morality was a considerable advance on the miracle play. In the latter, the poet, if we may so call him, was entirely subjected to his story, which he set out exactly as he found it, in successive scenes, having little or no connexion with one another; but in the Morality there was no such scheme made ready to his hand—or, rather, no such power of doing without any scheme. He must invent, he must combine, he must reflect. Without this, it would be quite impossible for him to bring ought to the birth, which would satisfy even the very moderate claims which the hearers and spectators of the fifteenth century made upon the author.

In Calderon's *autos* the Morality very much preponderates over the miracle play. In fact, none of them are properly this last. If we look among his compositions for the lineal descendants, though in high artistic forms, of this play, we must find them in such *comedias* as *The Purgatory of St. Patrick*, or *The Wonder-working Magician*, mentioned already. There are, on the other hand, many which are pure Moralities, while perhaps there are more in which allegorical and historical personages are mingled, though this mixture is not so repugnant to true taste, nor yet so unmanageable, as might at first sight appear, seeing that even the historic personages are for the most part typical or symbolic—Adam, for instance, of human nature; Moses, of the law; and the same with the others.

Enough has been already said to make plain that there can be nothing easier than to give a description of the Spanish *autos*, of Calderon's above all, which shall present them as merely and supremely ridiculous to as many as, except from the accounts thus rendered, are entirely unacquainted with them; and who, consequently, are wholly at the beck and mercy of the scorner. Thus the Countess d'Aulnoy describes these *autos* as 'certain poor tragedies acted upon religious subjects;' pronounces one which she witnessed 'the most impertinent piece I ever saw of this kind in all

my life;' giving an outline of it, which, if we knew no more, would abundantly justify the sentence which she passes upon it. She does not mention its name or author, but from her account it appears to have been *The Military Orders* of Calderon.* Southey also, in his *Omniana* and elsewhere,† has not resisted the temptation of setting them—which, as I have said, is so easy—in a ridiculous light. But he should not have given way to the temptation. Critics like Sismondi, who undertake to judge of poetry with all insight into anything deeper than its merest forms denied them, may give utterance to such judgments about the *autos*, as that which Sismondi has most naturally expressed; and if he had studied the whole seventy-two, instead of the single one which with a certain candour he allows is all that he actually has perused, his judgment would not have been different, probably his indignation against them would only have been roused to a higher pitch.‡ But to Southey, himself a poet, and

* *The Lady's Travels in Spain*, in Harris's *Travels*, vol. ii. p. 754.

† *Commonplace Book, 2nd Series*, p. 253. Compare an almost incredible account of an *auto* which he witnessed, given by the Rev. Edward Clarke in *Letters concerning the Spanish Nation, written at Madrid during the years* 1760 *and* 1761, London, 1763, pp. 103–105.

‡ Bouterwek (*Hist. of Spanish Literature*, p. 372, Ross' translation,) is not so scornful, but more inaccurate, dismissing them in about a dozen lines, and mentioning by name only one, *The Devotion of the Cross*, which is not an *auto* at all.

not without audacities of his own, the beauty and grandeur of these poems ought not to have been entirely hidden. Very different is the judgment of Shelley. 'I am bathing myself,' he writes in 1820, 'in the light and odour of the starry *autos*.'

Nothing, as I have said, is easier than to win a laugh against these, and at the same time nothing shallower or more worthless than the laugh so won. One has indeed for the winning of this only to enumerate the ordinary *personnel* of these plays, which consists of such allegorical or metaphysical persons as the following: The World, Idolatry, Heresy, Apostasy, Truth, Falsehood, Doubt, The Will, Thought, Faith, Hope, Charity, The Synagogue, The Four Elements, The Four Seasons, The Five Senses, Innocence, Grace, The Prince, The Man, Lucifer; with many more of the same description, and certain Old Testament characters, most often these: Noah, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, Job, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Daniel, Belshazzar. To these when we have added Orpheus, Perseus, Andromeda, Medusa, Psyche, the Sibyls, with other names of the Greek and Italian mythology, we shall have the usual *dramatis personæ* of these religious plays. The bare enumeration is alone sufficient to present ample material of ridicule to one unable or unwilling to place himself in a region of art altogether new, and alien from all those in which he

may hitherto have moved. But one who is able to plant himself there, and who cares to make closer acquaintance with these poems, will very soon be filled with quite other feelings, as this acquaintance increases.

He will be filled, I fear not to say, with an endless astonishment and admiration at the skill of the poet in conquering the almost unconquerable difficulties of his theme, at the power with which he masters and moulds the most heterogeneous materials, combining them and making them subservient to the purposes of his art, at the inexhaustible variety which he contrives by aid of new combinations to impart to materials which he may have been already compelled often to employ, at the transparent intention of his allegory, the inner spirit looking ever through the symbol, informing it with its own life, and leaving in the end to one who will give pains to master his meaning no doubt or hesitation about this. Add to these merits, the gorgeous poetic diction, wherein he clothes the flights of an imagination, for which nothing is too bold, which dares to reach all worlds; while, most wonderful triumph of all, he is able to impart even a dramatic interest to that which, whatever other merits it might acquire in its treatment, might have seemed in its very nature incapable of this merit. But so it is; he makes his reader to follow now, as no doubt

the spectator did formerly, with liveliest interest the fortunes of his abstract persons. This he effects, partly by his consummate skill, which has not deserted him here, in preparing and bringing about his situations; but chiefly because these persons, abstract as they are, are yet representatives of great and abiding interests for man. It is in one shape or another man's struggle and his temptations, his fall and his rise again, with the wonders of redeeming love, which are set forth before our eyes.

For indeed it is the Christian poet, whom in characterizing the *autos* we are called primarily to contemplate; one finding his inspiration in the great mysteries of revelation and redemption. But saying this, I would not in the least keep out of sight that Calderon, a zealous Roman Catholic, and that too after the Spanish fashion, writes unmistakeably as such; sometimes therefore in the interests of his Church as distinct from, and sometimes, alas! as directly opposed to, the interests of eternal truth. There are of these *autos*—*Sacramental autos* they are always called, as always glorifying at the close the Sacrament of Christ's blessed Body and Blood—some which are so shot through with the threads of superstition and error that these may be regarded as constituting their main texture and woof; for instance, one, but even poetically regarded a very poor one, *The Protestation of the*

*Faith*, on the reconciliation of Queen Christina of Sweden with the Church of Rome. It must be owned too that he nowhere employs the rare gifts with which he was endowed for the disengaging of the popular faith from the extravagances which were cleaving to it. The popular religion is his religion. On the glorifying of this he lavishes the whole wealth of his genius. Here it is that Dante is so greatly his superior, standing in so much above, in so much aloof from, his age. But Calderon belongs to his age and his nation. They find their voice in him. Of whatever they offered he could make noblest use; but he could not, even where it was most necessary, release himself from them. Still the *autos* with which we find such earnest fault are comparatively few. The springs of his inspiration are not, more than any other man's, in the errors which he holds, but in the truth. And it is not too much to say of the larger number of these marvellous works that they are hymns of loftiest praise to redeeming Love, summonses to all things which have breath to praise the Lord; and he too writes as one that has seen Satan fall like lightning from heaven, and rejoices in spirit with his Lord.*

* Schack, in his admirable *History of Dramatic Literature and Art in Spain*, referred to already, keeps for the most part in the cooler region of prose, yet now and then puts on his singing robes, and soars into empyreal regions, whither it is not easy to follow him. He does so in the following passage, in which he characterizes

There is nothing which Calderon loves better to set forth in these *autos* than the manner in which all

generally the best Spanish *autos*, but has evidently those of Calderon specially in his eye (vol. ii. p. 398): 'Wer zuerst in den Zauberkreis dieser Dichtungen eintritt, der fühlt sich von einem fremden Geiste angeweht, und erblickt einen anderen Himmel, der sich über eine andere Welt ausspannt. Es ist als ob dämonische Mächte uns in finsteren Stürmen davontrügen; schwindelerregende Tiefen des Denkens thun sich auf, wunderbar-räthselhafte Gestalten entsteigen der Finsterniss, und die dunkelrothe Flamme der Mystik leuchtet in den geheimnissvollen Born hinein, aus dem alle Dinge entspringen. Aber die Nebel zertheilen sich und man sieht sich über die Schranken des Irdischen hinaus, jenseits von Raum und Zeit, in das Reich des Unermesslichen und Ewigen gerissen. Hier verstummen alle Misstöne; bis hierher steigen die Stimmen der Menschenwelt nur wie feierliche Hymnen, von Orgelklängen getragen, empor. Ein riesiger Dom von geistiger Architektur nimmt uns auf, in dessen ehrfurchtgebietenden Hallen kein profaner Ton laut zu werden wagt; auf dem Altar thront, von magischem Licht umflossen, das Mysterium der Dreieinigkeit; ein Strahlenglanz, wie ihn irdische Sinne kaum zu ertragen vermögen, dringt hervor und umleuchtet die gewaltigen Säulenhallen mit, einer wunderbaren Glorie. Hier sind alle Wesen in die Anschauung des Ewigen versenkt und blicken staunend in die unergründlichen Tiefen der göttlichen Liebe. Die ganze Schöpfung stimmt in einen Jubelchor zur Verherrlichung des Urquells alles Lebens zusammen; selbst das Wesenlose redet und empfindet; das Todte gewinnt Sprache und den lebendigen Ausdruck des Gedankens; die Gestirne und Elemente, die Steine und Pflanzen zeigen Seele und Selbstbewusstsein; die verborgensten Gedanken und Gefühle der Menschen springen an's Licht; Himmel und Erde strahlen in symbolischer Verklärung. Auch abgesehen von dem tiefen inneren Gehalt dieser Dichtungen, muss der Glanz in der Ausführung des Einzelnen entzücken. Vielleicht in keinem ihrer anderen Werke haben die spanischen Dichter den poetischen Reichthum, über den sie, wie sonst Niemand, zu gebieten hatten, so concentrirt, wie hier. Es ist ein Farbenschmelz, ein Blüthenduft und ein Zauber des entzückendsten Wohllauts, der alle Sinne berauscht.'—Compare vol. iii. pp. 252–256.

23613

creation served man in the time of his innocence, but turns upon him directly he has sinned ; rebels against him, because he has rebelled against his Lord ; and will only return to its obedience, when he has returned to his own ; which same is a very favourite thought with Augustine. Thus in more than one of these Mysteries, Human Nature appears as a royal Princess, all nature, represented, it may be, by the Four Seasons, or by the Four Elements, doing her willing service, and rendering to her freely, so long as she continues in her innocence and first state of good, homage and obedience ; laying at her feet all the choicest offerings that they have. So soon, however, as she has transgressed the commandment, they all rise up against her ; or, attempting to console her, prove miserable comforters, only afflicting the more. This is very sublimely brought out in *The Poison and the Antidote*, in *Perseus and Andromeda*, in *The Military Orders*, and often elsewhere.

The manner in which Calderon uses the Greek mythology is exceedingly interesting. He was gifted with an eye singularly open for the true religious element which, however overlaid and debased, is yet to be detected in all inferior forms of religion. These religions were to him the vestibules through which the nations had been guided, till they reached the temple of the absolute religion, where God is worshipped in

Christ. The reaching out and feeling after an unknown true, of which he detected something even in the sun-worship of the Peruvians (see in proof his fine play, *Daybreak in Copacabana*), he recognized far more distinctly in the more human, and therefore more divine, mythology and religion of ancient Greece. Possibly the genuine Castilian alienation from the Jew, which was not wanting in him, may in part have been at work when he extols, as he so often loves to do, the superior readiness of the Gentile world, as contrasted with the Jewish Church, to receive the proffered salvation, its greater receptivity of the truth. But whether this had any share in the matter or not, it is a theme to which he is constantly in these *autos* recurring, and which he loves under the most various aspects to present. And generally he took a manifest delight in finding or making a deeper meaning for the legends and tales of the classical world, seeing in them the symbols and unconscious prophecies of Christian truth. He had no misgivings, therefore, but that these would yield themselves freely to be moulded by his hands. He felt that in employing them he would not be drawing down the sacred into the region of the profane; but elevating that which had been profaned into its own proper region and place. These legends of heathen antiquity supply the allegorical substratum for several of his

*autos.** Now it is *The True God Pan* ; or it is the story of Perseus rescuing Andromeda from the great sea-monster, or Theseus destroying the Labyrinth, or Ulysses defying the enchantments of Circe, or the exquisite mythus of Cupid and Psyche. Each in turn supplies him with some new poetical aspect under which to contemplate the very highest truth of all.

But while with the freedom and boldness of a Christian poet, who feels that all things are his, that the inheritance on which he enters is as wide as the world itself, he does not shrink from turning these to his purposes, compelling them to yield up their better meaning to him, his *autos* rest more often upon directly sacred foundations, very frequently on facts and personages of the Old Testament which are typical of the New. *The Brazen Serpent*, *Gideon's Fleece*, *The Sheaves of Ruth*, *Belshazzar's Feast*, *The First and Second Isaac*, *The Tree of the choicest Fruit*, *Dreams which are true* (this resting on the story of Joseph), these are the titles of some, and titles

* There is an interesting essay on this subject, and generally on the use which Calderon makes of the classical mythology, by Leopold Schmidt in the *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, 1855, under this title, *Ueber Calderon's Behandlung antiker Mythen ;* interesting in itself; and also as showing that the interest in Calderon was still lively in Germany some five and twenty years ago, and that some of its eminent classical scholars shared in it.

which will for the most part at once suggest their several arguments. Some again are the working out under new shapes of New Testament parables; such for instance is *The Vineyard of the Lord*, *The Wheat and the Tares*, *The Hid Treasure*, *The Called and Chosen* (being the marriage of the King's son), *To thy neighbour as thyself*, being that of *The Good Samaritan*. Others are founded on legends of the Church, as *The Leprosy of Constantine*, *The Exaltation of the Cross* (turning on the recovery of this from Chosroes the Persian King); while in others scriptural and ecclesiastical alike fall into the background, as in *The Great Theatre of the World*, in *The World's Great Fair*; and he chooses a more purely ethical treatment of his subject. Several, again, are very curious, as being *doubles* of secular dramas of his own, generally with the same name which those bear, and intended to furnish a key to their inner intention. Thus *Life's a Dream*, of which an analysis will be given in this volume, has a duplicate bearing the same name among the *autos*, supplying many interesting points of comparison. It is exactly the same with another, *The Painter of his own Dishonour*; while *Perseus and Andromeda* is in like manner a twice-told tale. There are cases in which the name is different, but the argument is altogether the same; only that in the *auto* the treatment is directly religious, which in the secular

drama it was not; thus *Love the greatest Enchantment* is the story of Ulysses and Circe told in the one sense, *The Sorceries of Sin* is the same told in the other, but with most interesting and instructive cross-lights from the one to the other.

Very worthy of note in not a few of these plays is the skill with which Calderon turns to account and makes poetry of that which might be supposed at first a material the most stubbornly resisting and opposing itself to any such uses—as doubtless for an ordinary genius it would so prove—I mean the Scholastic Theology of the Church. That it is not really such, that it can supply stuff which the loftiest poetry can find akin to and ministrant to itself, which it can work up homogeneously into its own texture and woof, this Dante had abundantly shown long ago; to the understanding of whose *Divine Comedy* no single book, after the Vulgate, contributes gains so large as the *Summa Theologiæ* of Aquinas. Nor had Calderon made his studies for nothing in the Scholastic Theology at Salamanca. The subtleties of it are sometimes not wanting in his worldly plays, where their introduction cannot always be justified; in his religious there is no such apparent unfitness, and in them he often makes admirable use of it, compelling it to yield excellent service to him. Thus when *The Man* supposes that he can suffer one only of the Virtues to

withdraw from him, he all the while retaining the rest, and that one gives its hand to another, and that one to the next, until all forsake him who has willingly dismissed one, we have here the great scriptural truth that obedience is of the whole man, that he who is guilty of one is guilty of all, that to drop one link in the golden chain of obedience is to leave it a chain no longer ; but we have this truth under forms which that Theology supplied.

In more than one of these *autos*, as in *The Sacred Year of Madrid*, he has a magnificent scene in which man, the pilgrim, is forgetting his pilgrim state, and would fain play the courtier at the great court of this world. The seven mortal Sins are arraying him and furnishing him forth, each with the several symbol of its enticement—Pride with hat and feathers—Wantonness with a looking-glass—Avarice with a casket of jewels—Gluttony with a salver of fruits—Anger with a drawn sword—Envy with a cloak and hood. Or again, as in *The World's Great Fair*, an *auto* of rare depth and beauty, the man enters as a trader with his entrusted talent on the great market-place of the world, which is set out with all its attractive wares, with its false and its true, its shadows and its substances, its pebbles and its jewels, its repulsive haircloth, its alluring purple ; his Good and his Evil Genius, ever at his side as he passes through the fair, and severally suggesting

to him that he should lay out his talent in making these or making those his own.

Another charming *auto* bears this title, *There is no Fortune but God*, or in other words, God and not fortune or chance is the supreme arbiter of our lives. In this are seen at the first sleeping forms, the men that hereafter shall be, waiting under the Tree of Life the summons to an active existence. Distributive Justice, presiding but invisibly over the whole scene, touches with her wand and slightly shakes the branches of the Tree, on which hang the ensigns of the various estates of life on which these sleepers shall presently enter. As she touches them, one by one, they fall off, and falling waken those for whom they are destined. On one falls sceptre and crown, for he must be king ; a sword drops from the tree at the feet of another, the soldier that shall be ; Beauty is furnished with a mirror, a book designates the student, a staff the beggar, and so on. As they are separating to go forth to their several tasks, one calls attention to the fact that a Cross has fallen in their midst, not nearer to one than to another, but near to all. All disclaim it, and any share in it. It is not for me, exclaims the king ; the cares of state are sufficient without adding a cross to them. Neither for me, exclaims the soldier, dangers and toils enough are before me. What is Beauty's task but to admire herself and to be admired

by others—a cross, which would spoil all, could never have been meant for her? The husbandman counts it enough that he should eat his bread in the sweat of his brow; while the beggar resents that, weighted with such a burden as he is, any should suggest a further burden for him. It is in vain that Distributive Justice explains that this Cross, attached itself to none in particular, is intended to be the common treasure of all, and sets forth the blessedness which goes along with it in touching lines of remonstrance, of which these are a few :—

> To his lot let each man add it,
> For, by this great staff supported,
> He shall see that with like sweetness
> It can prop the saddest mourner
> And uphold the noblest victor.
> Come then, start not back in horror
> At the red enamel, tinging
> Where one line the other crosses,
> For on no man weighs this burden
> Heavier than can bear his shoulder.

They cannot find themselves in this explanation, and go forward each to make proof of how much pleasure this life, the gift of fortune, as they one and all declare, can be made to yield. How the experiment succeeds, under what discipline they pass, some making shipwreck under it, the rest learning the true meaning of their lives, and above all the mean-

ing of the Cross, till one and all they earnestly strive to make this their own which at first they so hated—all this I must leave my readers to learn, if not from the original, then from the admirable analysis of the play for which we are indebted to a lady.*

Or, again, some tale of the old mythology, as that of Circe for instance, is used for illustrating the enticements and allurements of sin, the deep entanglements of the flesh—ever indeed with the most perfect purity; the divine tact of the poet shining out as gloriously here as Milton's does in his *Comus*; while yet these flatteries and falsehoods of the flesh have never been set forth with a more wondrous art. In most cases, the poems are triumphant hymns of a victory which at the last is gained over the world and sin and death. The man is saved; and even if he be entangled for a while, he is enabled by a better strength than his own to break away at last. And it is fit that it should most frequently be so; for these poems are intended to celebrate the mysteries *of redemption*. Yet it is not so always; even as these purposes of redemption are not always fulfilled, but sometimes baffled and defeated by the pride and obstinacy of man. Sometimes, as in that sublime *auto*, *Belshazzar's Feast*, all the resources of divine love are

* To Miss Hasell, in her *Calderon*, 1879, pp. 93, sqq.

exhausted in vain, and the sinner perishes in despite of them all.

While thus in so many, man and man's trial and temptation occupy the foremost places of the drama, the interest revolving around him and turning on the final issues of his conflict with the opposing powers of darkness, the Mightier Helper only coming in to assist and to deliver, in others *He* is the protagonist, and assumes the foremost place in the whole. Thus is it when as the Divine Orpheus, in the play bearing this name, He goes down to hell to bring back his lost Eurydice ; or as Love delivers Psyche from all the consequences of her fault, helps her to surmount her trials, and at length is united to her for ever.*

But I must not attempt to follow out any farther this portion of the subject. It would not be easy to exhaust all which on the matter of these *autos* suggests itself to be said ; and I must be contented with offering to the reader, not otherwise informed, this slight and imperfect account of these strange and wonderful compositions, and with the intention to add to this the rapid analysis of one among them, before this volume is done, bring this part of my subject to a close.

* See a sketch of this last in Southey's *Omniana*, vol. i. p. 128.

## CHAPTER IV.

### BEAUTIES OF CALDERON.

A PERSIAN proverb has said, 'You may bring a nosegay to the town, but you cannot bring the garden.' This is a true saying, and *Beauties of Shakespeare*, or *Beauties* of anyone else who has indeed such to offer, abundantly attest its truth. For these *Beauties* in the first place are *gathered* flowers, in place of *growing* flowers; they are, if not out of their place, at any rate not in their place, borrowing no loveliness from their surroundings, and lending none in turn to them. And then besides this they constitute in general an insignificant fragment of the wealth, whereof they are put forward as specimens. A nugget does but imperfectly represent a gold-field, however it may give us an inkling of its wealth. Still, if these *Beauties* are only offered and accepted with a tacit understanding of what they are and what they are not, there is no reason why selections of them should not be made; so little indeed do I object to them that I propose here to introduce a few exemplary specimens of Calderon's art, and these in their original language, wearing,

that is, all the grace and ornament which properly is theirs, and not the faint traces and vestiges of this which very often are all that a translation has preserved. This little volume, written in English, is of course designed primarily for English readers. Still these will scarcely feel themselves aggrieved by my here making room for specimens of the poet's skill which will only be accessible to those who read him in the original.

Here, for example, is a rich and poetical description of a great armament at sea, as beheld slowly advancing by one who watched its approach from the land. It occurs in *The Steadfast Prince*:—

Yo lo sé, porque en el mar
Una mañana, á la hora
Que medio dormido el sol,
Atropellando las sombras
Del ocaso, desmaraña
Sobre jasmines y rosas
Rubios cabellos, que enjuga
Con paños de oro á la aurora
Lágrimas de fuego y nieve,
Que el sol convirtió en aljófar,
Que á largo trecho del agua
Venia una gruesa tropa
De naves; si bien entonces
No pudo la vista absorta
Determinarse á decir
Si eran naos, ó si eran rocas;

Porque como en los matices
Sútiles pinceles logran
Unos visos, unos lejos,
Que en perspectiva dudosa
Parecen montes tal vez,
Y tal ciudades famosas,
Porque la distancia siempre
Monstruos imposibles forma;
Así en paises azules
Hicieron luces y sombras,
Confundiendo mar y cielo
Con las nubes y las ondas,
Mil engaños á la vista;
Pues ella entonces curiosa,
Solo percibió los bultos,
Y no distinguió las formas.
Primero nos pareció,
Viendo que sus puntas tocan
Con el cielo, que eran nubes,
De las que á la mar se arrojan
Á concebir en zafir
Lluvias, que en cristal abortan;
Y fue bien pensado, pues
Esta innumerable copia
Pareció que pretendia
Sorberse el mar gota á gota.
Luego de marinos monstruos
Nos pareció errante copia,
Que á acompañar á Neptuno
Salian de sus alcobas;
Pues sacudiendo las velas,
Que son del viento lisonja,

Pensamos que sacudian
Las alas sobre las olas.
Ya parecia mas cerca
Una inmensa Babilonia,
De quien los pénsiles fueron
Flámulas, que el viento azotar..
Aqui ya desengañada
La vista, mejor se informa
De que era armada, pues vió
A los sulcos de las proas,
Cuando batidas espumas
Ya se encrespan, ya se entorchan,
Rizarse montes de plata,
De cristal cuajarse rocas.*

In *Zenobia the Great*, the captive queen of Palmyra answers Aurelian, her boastful conqueror, in the following language. The passage is a noble example of Spanish poetical diction at its richest and its best :—

Aureliano, las venganzas
De la fortuna son estas,
Que ni son grandezas tuyas,
Ni culpas mias. Pues llegas
A conocer sus mudanzas,
Valor finge, ánimo muestra ;
Que mañana es otro dia,
Y á una breve fácil vuelta
Si trúecan las monarquías,
Y los imperios se truecan.
Verce y calla ; pues yo sufro

* *Comedias*, vol. i. p. 262.

Y espero ; para que veas,
Que, pues yo no desconfio,
Será razon que tú temas.
No la ambicion te levante
Tanto, que midiendo esferas
De tu misma vanidad,
La altura te desvanezca.
Sale el alba coronada
De rayos, y el sol despliega
Al mundo cendales de oro,
Que enjuguen llanto de perlas ;
Sube hasta el zenit ; mas luego
Declina, y la noche negra
Por las exequias del sol
Doseles de luto cuelga.
Impelida de los vientos
Con alas de lino vuela
Alta nave, presumiendo
Todo el mar pequeña esfera ;
Y en un punto, en un instante
Brama el viento, el mar se altera,
Que parece que sus ondas
Van á apagar las estrellas.
El dia teme la noche,
La serenidad espera
La borrasca, el gusto vive
Á espaldas de la tristeza.*

I have quoted (p. 37), at least in part, Shelley's grand translation of the speech of the fallen archangel, from *The Wonder-working Magician.* I give

* *Comedias,* vol. i. p. 90.

here a portion of it in the original. The spirit of untamed pride and of an immortal hate, it will be seen, breathes through this quite as much as through Shelley's rendering of it:—

Yo soy, pues saberlo quieres,
Un epílogo, un asombro
De venturas y desdichas
Que unas pierdo y otras lloro.
Tan galan fui por mis partes,
Por mi lustre tan heróico,
Tan noble por mi linage,
Y por mi ingenio tan docto
Que, aficionado á mis prendas,
Un Rey, el mayor de todos,
Puesto que todos le temen,
Si le ven airado el rostro,
En su palacio cubierto
De diamantes y piropos,
Y aun si los llamase estrellas,
Fuera el hipérbolo corto,
Mi llamó valido suyo;
Cuyo aplauso generoso
Me dió tan grande soberbia,
Que competí al regio solio,
Queriendo poner las plantas
Sobre sus dorados tronos.
Fue bárbaro atrevimiento,
Castigado lo conozco.
Loco anduve; pero fuera
Arrepentido mas loco.
Mas quiero en mi obstinacion,

Con mis alientos briosos
Despeñarme de bizarro,
Que rendirme de medroso,
Si fueron temeridades,
No me ví en ellas tan solo,
Que de sus mismos vasallos
No tuviese muchos votos.
De su corte en fin vencido,
Aunque in parte victorioso
Sali, arrojando venenos
Por la boca y por los ojos,
Y pregonando venganzas
Por ser mi agravio notorio,
Logrando en las gentes suyas
Insultos, muertes y robos.
Los anchos campos del mar
Sangriento pirata corro,
'Argos ya de sus bajios,
Y lince de sus escollos.*

I took occasion to mention at page 46 of this little volume, and with the honour which it deserved, Mr. Fitzgerald's admirable rendering of *The Mayor of Zalamea.* One passage above all he singles out for his special admiration. Let me here quote a fragment of this:—

Nunca amenezca á mis ojos
La luz hermosa del dia,
Porque á su nombre no tenga
Vergüenza yo de mí misma.

* *Comedias,* vol. iii. p. 408.

¡ O tú, de tantas estrellas
Primavera fugitiva,
No des lugar á la aurora,
Que tu azul campaña pisa,
Para que con risa y llanto
Borre tu apacible vista !
Y ya que ha de ser, que sea
Con llanto, mas no con risa.
¡ Detente, o mayor planeta,
Mas tiempo en la espuma fria
Del mar ! ¡ Deja, que una vez
Dilate la noche esquiva
Su trémulo imperio ; deja,
Que de tu deidad se diga,
Atenta á mis ruegos, que es
Voluntaria, y no precisa !
¿ Para qué quieres salir
Á ver en la historia mia
La mas enorme maldad,
La mas fiera tiranía
Que en venganza de los hombres
Quiere el cielo que se escriba ?
Mas, ay de mi ! que parece
Que es crueldad tu tiranía ;
Pues desde que te he rogado,
Que te detuvieses, miran
Mis ojos tu faz hermosa
Descollarse por encima
De los montes.*

Little fables, or other narratives, compositions

* *Comedias*, vol. iv. p. 104.

perfectly rounded and complete in themselves, occur not unfrequently in Calderon's plays. Here is a beautiful example, drawn from his comedy, *The Poor Man is all Plots* :—

Estaba un almendro ufano
De ver, que su pompa era
Alba de la primavera,
Y mañana del verano ;
Y viendo su sombra vana,
Que el viento en penachos mueve
Hojas de púrpura y nieve,
Aves de carmin y grana,
Tanto se desvaneció,
Que, Narciso de las flores,
Empezó á decirse amores ;
Cuando un lirio humilde vió,
Á quien vano dijo asi :
Flor, que magestad no quieres,
¿ No te desmayas y mueres
De invidia de verme á mí ?
Sopló en esto el austro fiero,
Y desvaneció cruel
Toda la pompa, que á él
Le desvaneció primero.
Vió, que caduco y helado
Diluvios de hojas derrama,
Seco tronco, inútil rama,
Yerto cadáver del prado.
Volvió al lirio, que guardaba
Aquel verdor que tenia,
Y contra la tirania
Del tiempo se conservaba,

Y dijole : venturoso
Tú, que en uno estado estás
Permaneciente, jamas
Envidiado, ni envidioso.
Tu vivir solo es vivir,
No llegues á florecer,
Porque tener que perder,
Solo es tener que sentir.*

On man a rebel against God, and on nature a rebel therefore against man, the poet dwells much and often. In his Mysteries, as I have said already, it is a continually recurring thought. In *The Poison and the Antidote*, the Princess, that is, Human Nature, thus bewails the miserable change for the worse in all her surroundings which her sin has brought with it :—

Hermoso luciente sol,
Que ayer tanta luz me diste,
Como oy en pálida y triste
Noche embuelves tu arrebol?
Luna, trémulo farol
De la noche, astro inconstante,
Que ayer con blanco semblante
Me illuminaste luciente,
Cómo oy, si todo el creciente,
Padeces todo el menguante?
Flores, que ayer á mis ojos
Blancas, purpureas y bellas,
Fuisteis humanas centellas,
Cómo oy todas sois abrojos?

* *Comedias*, vol. i. p. 456.

Fieras, que ayer en despojos
Me rendisteis mil alhagos,
Y quedandose en amagos,
Vuestra saña suspendida,
Fuisteis lisonja á mi vida,
Cómo oy todas sois estragos?
Aves, que auroras y siestas
Erades dulces, y graves
Musicas ayer suaves,
Cómo oy todas sois funestas?
Fuentes, que en estas florestas
Ayer erades espejos,
Cómo mirando os estoy
Á todas tan turbias oy,
Sin visos y sin reflexos?
En todo mudanza veo;
Con qué estrañeza lo admiro!
En todo novedad miro,
Con qué assombro lo creo!
Saber si en mí la ay deseo;
Aunque estés tan turbia, en tí,
Fuente, he de verme; ay de mi!
Un yerto cadaver es
El que llego á mirar, pues
Nada soy de lo que fuí.*

But lovelier still than this is a passage on the same theme from *The Military Orders*. The situation is the same; but the flight of the poet is higher:—

Ay infelize de mi!
Por mí el sol sin lumbre bella?

* *Autos*, vol. iii. p. 225.

Turbia la Luna, la Estrella
Mustia, pálido Alhelí
El Jasmin mas transparente?
Por mí sin verdor la Oliva?
El Pozo sin agua viva?
Sin puro cristal la Fuente,
Sin harmoniosa salva
La luz que los montes dora?
Por mí con llanto la Aurora?
Y por mí sin risa el Alva?
El claro Espejo manchado?
El Huerto menos florido?
El Cyprés desvanecido?
El Plátano deshojado?
El Lirio yerto, la Flor
Mustia, ajada la Azucena,
La Rosa de espinas llena,
Y con sombras el candor
Del rosiclér de los dias? *

Again, in that fine play *The Scarf and the Flower*, the relative merits of the colours green and blue come into debate. He who receives from one lady a flower on its green stalk, from another a scarf of azure blue, from which of these did he receive the most significant gift? whether of the two might here be regarded as a love-token? They sing alternately the praises of green and blue, in one of those exquisite lyric pieces of which Calderon is a master so supreme. It is thus

* *Autos*, vol. ii. p. 124.

that the graceful contention begins, A and B standing here for the several votaries of green and blue :—

A. La verde es color primera,
Del mundo, y en quien consiste
Su hermosura, pues se viste
De verde la primavera.
La vista mas lisonjera
Es aquel verde ornamento,
Pues sin voz y con aliento
Nacen de varios colores
En cuna verde las flores,
Que son estrellas del viento.

B. Al fin es color del suelo,
Que se marchita y se pierde ;
Y cuando el suelo de verde
Se viste, de azul el cielo.
Primavera es su azul velo,
Donde son las flores bellas
Vivas luces ; mira en ellas
Qué trofeos son mayores,
Un campo cielo de flores,
Ó un cielo campo de estrellas.

A. Ese es color aparente,
Que la vista para objeto
Finge ; que el cielo en efeto
Color ninguno consiente.
Con azul fingido miente
La hermosura de su esfera :
Luego en esa parte espera
Ser la tierra preferida.
Pues la una es beldad fingida
Y otra es pompa verdadera.

B. Confieso, que no es color
Lo azul del cielo, y confieso
Que es mucho mejor por eso ;
Porque, si fuera en rigor
Propio, no fuera favor
La eleccion ; y de aqui infiero,
Que, si le eligió primero,
Fue, porque lo azul ha sido
Aun mejor para fingido,
Que otro para verdadero.
A. Lo verde dice esperanza,
Que es el mas immenso bien
Del amor. Digalo quien
Ni la tiene ni la alcanza.
Lo azul zelos y mudanza
Dice, que es tormento eterno,
Sin paz, quietud ni gobierno.
¿ Qué importa pues, que el amor
Tenga del cielo el color
Si tiene el mal del infierno ?
B. Quien con esperanza vive,
Poco le debe su dama ;
Pero quien con zelos ama,
En bronce su amor escribe :
Luego aquel que se apercibe
Á amar zeloso, hace mas,
En cuya razon verás
Cuanto alcanzan sus desvelos ;
Pues el infierno de zelos
No espera favor jamas.*

* *Comedias*, vol. iv. p. 298.

With poems like these before one, there is no need to wonder that a young Spanish scholar should in the present day have written an essay on *Calderon considered as a lyrical Poet.* I have never seen this essay,* and know no more of it than the title. But the subject is a happy one, and the choice of it indicates a due appreciation, on one side at least, of the merits of the poet—such an appreciation of his merits as during the dominion of French tastes beyond the Pyrenees seemed wholly to have departed—not from the people, for they always remained true to their national poet—but from the critics of Spain.

Very graceful again and very complete is the following lament; so complete, that it may be detached without serious loss from its context. It is drawn from a very notable play, *To Know Good and Evil*:—

¡ Ay amor, falsa Sirena,
Cuja queja, cuya voz,
Rompiendo el aire veloz,
Dulcisimamente suena,
Y está de traiciones llena !
¡ Ay amor, serpiente ingrata,
Que en sus afectos retrata
La pasion que me provoca :
Pues halaga con la boca
Á quien con la cola mata !

* It is published in the *Revista de Madrid* vol. iii. 1839, the author being Alberto Liska.

! Ay amor, veneno vil,
Que viene en vaso dorado !
! Ay amor, áspid pisado
Entre las flores de Abril !
! Mal haya una vez, y mil,
Quien tus engaños consiente !
Miente tu lisonja ! miente
Tu halago, tu voz, tu pena ;
Porque eres, amor, Sirena,
'Aspid, veneno y serpiente.*

And this, too, has a pathos of its own :—

No es menester, que digais
Cuyas sois, mis alegrias,
Que bien se vé que sois mias
En lo poco que durais ;
Alegrias mal logradas,
Antes muertas que nacidas,
Rosas sin tiempo cogidas,
Flores sin sazon cortadas,
Si rendidas, si postradas
Á un ligero soplo estais,
No digais que el bien gozais,
Pues siendo para perder,
Que sintais es menester,
No es menester que digais.

I have more than once hinted at a certain artificial bearing on the part of our poet in face of the more earnest aspects of this life of ours, which sometimes

* *Comedias*, vol. i. p. 152.

it is impossible not to feel. It is only fair to press what may be urged on the other side, as at all events mitigating the severity of this charge. Thus all, I think, will acknowledge that there is no surer mark of genius, and of genius which does not shrink from the plainest and most often recurring realities of life, than the recognition of the mystery which so often lies in the common and the familiar. Only genius pierces or lifts the veil which custom and use have for most men so effectually thrown over these, that the most wonderful and most pregnant with meaning has come to have no meaning at all, if only it has been often enough repeated; according to that proverb, 'What is ever seen is never seen.' Only genius detects in the humblest very often a significant symbolism of the highest, and finds the ever new in that which is the oldest of all. Calderon will endure excellently well to be tried by the test suggested here. The mystery of the common, the symbolic character of many of our most ordinary actions and customs, is precious to him; and he constantly seeks to interpret it to others, and not to suffer it to pass by them unobserved. Take for instance the ever-recurring mystery of sleep and waking as the daily rehearsal on our parts of death and resurrection; he often recurs to it; but one example from *Belshazzar's Feast* will suffice :—

Descanso del sueño hace
El hombre, ay Dios! sin que advierta,
Que quando duerme, y despierta,
Cada dia muere, y nace:
Que vivo cadaver yáce
Cada dia, pues rendida
La vida á un breve homicida,
Que es su descanso no advierte
Una leccion, que la muerte
Le vá estudiando á la vida.*

Not less significant and prophetic to him are the dews and brightness of the early morning, corresponding as these do to the tears and laughter of those on whom it rises; as in these lines which follow:—

Al tiempo que ya la salva
Del sol estos montes dora
Sale riendo la aurora,
Y sale llorando el alba;
Risa y lágrimas envia
El dia al amanecer,
Para darnos á entender
Que amenece cada dia
Entre lirios y azucenas,
Entre rosas y jazmines,
Para dos contrarios fines
De contentos y de penas.

*Autos*, vol. ii. p. 207. Compare in the *Hercules Furens* of Seneca the grand address to Sleep in which these lines occur:—

Pavidum leti genus humanum
Cogis longam discere mortem.

A deeper significance for him has the tomb in its likeness to a cradle reversed, which has rejected its inmate. To this he recurs often, as for instance in *The Steadfast Prince*, where these are some of the noble Prince's dying words :—

Bien sé al fin, que soy mortal,
Y que no hay hora segura,
Y por eso dió una forma
Con una materia en una
Semejanza la razon
Al ataud y á la cuna.
Accion nuestra es natural,
Cuando recibir procura
Algo un hombre, alzar las manos
En esta manera juntas :
Mas cuando quiere arrojarlo,
De aquella misma accion usa,
Pues las vuelve boca abajo,
Porque asi las desocupa.
El mundo, cuando nacemos,
En señal de que nos busca,
En la cuna nos recibe,
Y en ella nos asegura
Boca arriba; pero cuando,
Ó con desden, ó con furia,
Quiere arrojarnos de sí,
Vuelve las manos que junta,
Y aquel instrumento mismo
Forma esta materia muda ;
Pues fue cuna boca arriba
Lo que boca abajo es tumba.*

* *Comedias*, vol. i. p. 278.

Again, of what exquisite lyric beauty, of what perfect finish and completeness in itself, is the following address to the Cross, in the play called *The Devotion of the Cross*, which has been referred to already:—

Árbol, donde el cielo quiso
Dar el fruto verdadero
Contra el bocado primero,
Flor del nuevo paraiso,
Arco de luz, cuyo aviso
En pielago mas profundo
La paz publicó del mundo,
Planta hermosa, fértil vid,
Arpa del nuevo David,
Tabla del Moises segundo:
Pecador soy, tus favores
Pido por justicia yo,
Pues Dios en ti padeció
Solo por los pecadores,
A mí me debes tus loores,
Que por mí solo muriera
Dios, si mas mundo no hubiera.

*Comedias*, vol. i. p. 114. These lines may be rendered thus:—

Tree, which heaven has willed to dower
With that true fruit whence we live,
As that other death did give;
Of new Eden loveliest flower;
Bow of light, that in worst hour
Of the worst flood signal true
O'er the world, of mercy threw;
Fair plant, yielding sweetest wine;
Of our David harp divine;

A considerable number of sonnets are scattered up and down through Calderon's plays. Some of these are among the best which the literature of Spain possesses. This, it is true, is not in itself very high commendation; for Spanish poetry, while it possesses an almost innumerable multitude of sonnets, yet can boast of very few which are of first-rate excellence, which will at all bear comparison with the great Italian or English poems in this kind. Calderon's sonnets are sometimes found in pairs, set one over against the other, and corresponding to, or mutually completing each other; as these two, beautiful in themselves, but deriving added beauty from the circumstances of those that speak them. One of them we may call the Flower Sonnet, lamenting as it does the brevity of the life of flowers :—

Estas, que fueron pompa y alegría,
Despertando al albor de la mañana,
Á la tarde serán lástima vana,
Durmiendo en brazos de la noche fria.
Este matiz, que al cielo desafia,
Iris listado de oro, nieve y grana,

---

Of our Moses tables new;
Sinner am I, therefore I
Claim upon thy mercies make,
Since alone for sinners' sake
God on thee endured to die;
And for me would God have died
Had there been no world beside.

Será escarmiento de la vida humana.
Tanto se emprende en término de un dia.
Á florecer las rosas madrugaron,
Y para envejecerse florecieron,
Cuna y sepulcro en un boton hallaron.
Tales los hombres sus fortunas vieron,
En un dia nacieron y espiraron,
Que pasados los siglos, horas fueron.*

This finds a counterpart in its twin, the Star Sonnet, which mourns over the life of stars as briefer still:—

Esos rasgos de luz, esas centellas,
Que cobran con amagos superiores
Alimentos del sol en resplandores,
Aquello viven, que se duelen dellas,
Flores nocturnas son, aunque tan bellas,
Efimeras padecen sus ardores;
Pues si un dia es el siglo de las flores,
Una noche es la edad de las estrellas.
De esa pues primavera fugitiva
Ya nuestro mal, ya nuestro bien se infiere,
Registro es nuestro, ó muera el sol, ó viva.
¿Qué duracion habrá que el hombre espere?
¿Ó qué mudanza habrá, que no reciba
De astro, que cada noche nace y muere? †

And the following is good, though not quite so good as those:—

Apenas el invierno helado y cano
Este monte de nieves encanece,

* *Comedias*, vol. i. p. 272. † *Ibid.* p. 272.

Cuando la primavera le florece,
Y el que helado se vió, se mira unfano.
Pasa la primavera, y el verano
Los rigores del sol sufre y padece.
Llega el fertil otoño, y enriquece
El monte de verdor, de fruta el llano.
Todo vive sujeto á la mudanza ;
De un dia y otro dia los engaños
Cumplen un año, y este al otro alcanza.
Con esperanza sufre desengaños
Un monte, que, á faltarle la esperanza,
Ya se rindiera al peso de los años.

But here these specimens must close.

## CHAPTER V.

### CALDERON IN ENGLAND.

WHEN did we begin to know anything of Calderon in England? and since the day that this acquaintance began, how far has it gone, and at what point does it stand? These are the questions which will occupy us now. The life of the Spanish poet was so greatly prolonged that he touched, and was contemporary with, two entirely different periods of English dramatic literature. When he began to write, Shakespeare indeed was just dead; but Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Ford and Shirley were in, or had not as yet attained, their prime. All these, as indeed the whole generation of the Elizabethan dramatists, with the exception of Shirley, died out before the Civil War began; but Calderon, overliving this, lasted on into a wholly different epoch, that of the artificial stilted tragedy, and of the comedy, morally more discreditable still, of the Restoration.

There is no evidence that during the first of these periods any of Calderon's plays had found their way to England, or were imitated by English writers, or that his name had been so much as heard among us.

The language indeed in which he wrote would have proved no barrier against such knowledge; on the contrary, a considerable number of our dramatic compositions belonging to this time are founded on Spanish novels and romances; nor does there want abundant evidence that Spanish during the latter half of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century was very widely known in England; indeed far more familiar than it ever since has been. The wars in the Low Countries, in which so many of our countrymen served, the probabilities at one period of a match with Spain, the fact that Spanish was almost as serviceable, and scarcely less indispensable, at Brussels, at Milan, at Naples, and for a time at Vienna, not to speak of Lima and Mexico, than at Madrid itself, the many points of contact, friendly and hostile, of England with Spain for well nigh a century, all this had conduced to an extended knowledge of Spanish in England. It was popular at court. Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth were both excellent Spanish scholars. A passage in Howell's *Letters*, and another in Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, would imply that at the time of Prince Charles's visit to Madrid, his Spanish was imperfect; but at a later date, that is in 1635, a Spanish play was acted by a Spanish company before him.* The statesmen,

* Collier, *History of English Dramatic Poetry*, 1831, vol. ii. p. 69.

scholars, and playwrights of the time were rarely ignorant of the language. We might confidently presume Raleigh's acquaintance with it; but in his *Discovery of Guiana* and other writings there is abundant proof of this. We observe the same evidence of a familiar knowledge of Spanish on Lord Bacon's part in the Spanish proverbs which he quotes, and in the fine observation which occasionally he makes on a Spanish word.* It was among the many accomplishments of Archbishop Williams, who, when the Spanish match was pending, caused the English Liturgy to be translated under his own eye into Spanish.†

The language therefore would have opposed no obstacle; yet it is not till after the Restoration that any traces of acquaintance with Calderon on the part of English writers appear. Little or nothing however came of this acquaintance then; as the genius was wanting in our playwrights to create a poetry of their own, so was it wanting to profit by the creations of others. *Elvira, or the Worse not always True*, by the Earl of Bristol, is a very poor recast of Calderon's

* Thus on *desenvoltura* in his Essay *On Fortune.*

† Hacket's *Life of Archbishop Williams*, part i. p. 127. For proofs of Ben Jonson's Spanish, if there needed such, see *The Alchemist*, act iv. sc. 1 and 2; and for more on this subject my *English Past and Present*, 1877, p. 123.

comedy of the same name;* one from which all the grace and charm of the original has departed. Another piece in Dodsley's 'Collection,' *The Adventures of Five Hours*, which one Crowne translated at the bidding of Charles II., making some changes in the catastrophe at the King's express desire, is a Spanish piece, but is not Calderon's, as is erroneously asserted in the preliminary remarks.† Dryden's *Mock Astrologer*, which appeared in 1668,‡ is drawn directly from *Le Feint Astrologue* of the younger Corneille, but not without comparison on the English poet's part with Corneille's original, namely, Calderon's play of the same name, though there is no mention of Calderon's name. Dryden, in that same spirit of strange delusion which, in his estimate of the worth of his own and his contemporaries' dramatic efforts, seemed never to forsake him, ventures on the following assertion, 'I will be so vain to say, it has lost nothing in my hands.' Never was author more mistaken; it has lost the elegance, the fancy, the whole ideal treatment, everything in

* See Dodsley's *Collection of Old Plays*, vol. xii. pp. 127–212. Its date is 1667.

† See Ward's *Dramatic Literature*, vol. ii. p. 465; and in many other places instructive references to the Spanish drama, and to the debt which the English drama of the Restoration owed to it; thus at p. 240.

‡ *Works* (Sir Walter Scott's edit.), vol. iii. p. 207, sqq.

fact which was worth retaining; its gains being only in ribaldry, *double entendre*, and that sort of coarse indecency in which unhappily Dryden so much delights; a sort which fortunately in the main defeats itself, being very much better calculated to turn the stomach than to rouse the passions. His plays are indeed, with very few exceptions, as a German critic has styled them, 'incredibly bad,' their moral tone and their art being about on an equality of badness, so that they appear, I confess, to me altogether undeserving that toleration, and sometimes much more than toleration, which Sir Walter Scott in his edition of Dryden has extended to them.

During the eighteenth century Calderon's name is, I should suppose, hardly mentioned, or only mentioned in the slightest and most inaccurate way, in English books. One comedy I am aware of, which the author announces as a translation* from him; but of no other point of contact between him and our English literature during the century. In fact, for a long period *Don Quixote* was supposed *to be* Spanish literature; and, as we esteemed, we had here not the man *unius libri*, but in a somewhat different sense,

* '*Tis well it's no worse*, London, 1770, from Calderon's *El Escondido y la Tapada*. I have not read the English; the Spanish is one of Calderon's most charming compositions 'of the cloak and sword,' in other words, of the high life of the time at which they were written.

the *nation*. The Schlegels were the earliest to waken up any new interest about him. This they did first in Germany, and the same has since extended, though very faintly indeed, to England. They effected it, Augustus by his *Spanish Theatre* which in fact is a translation of five plays of Calderon;* by his *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*;† and Frederic by his *History of Ancient and Modern Literature*.‡ One of the first in England whose attention was attracted to Calderon was Shelley. In one of his letters, with date December 1819, preserved to us in Leigh Hunt's *Lord Byron and his Contemporaries*, he expresses himself thus: 'Some of the ideal dramas of Calderon with which I have lately, and with inexpressible wonder and delight, become acquainted, are perpetually tempting me to throw over their perfect and glowing forms the grey veil of my own words.'

Various articles have since appeared from time to time in our leading periodicals,§ either seeking to

* Berlin, 1803—1809.

† Heidelberg, 1809—1811.

‡ Vienna, 1815.

§ As one in the *Quarterly Review*, April 1821. This, with another in *Blackwood*, Dec. 1839, and a third in the *Westminster and Foreign Quarterly*, Jan. 1851, are, with one exception of which I shall speak presently, the best general articles on Calderon of which I know; although none of them can be considered wholly satisfactory.

take the measure of Calderon's genius, or presenting actual specimens of it, in instances not a few entire dramas: and thus, or in independent volumes, a considerable number of his plays have been made accessible to the English reader, who however has never been persuaded to care much for the literature thus brought within his reach. The deeper reasons of this indifference, the causes which will always hinder his finding any very hearty, or at any rate any very wide reception in England, I will not attempt to enter upon further than I have done already. They lie deep; and the best explanation of them I know is to be found in two masterly articles in *The Athenæum* on Calderon,* written with a more intimate knowledge of their subject than anything else with which in English I am acquainted.

Other difficulties which will hinder his obtaining a home among us, or admiration from those who do not read him in his own language, are more external, yet they are not less real. They respect the *forms* which translations from the Spanish theatre must assume, and involve practical questions which are not capable of a satisfactory solution. Thus while one or two metres predominate in the Spanish drama, it claims for itself the right of unlimited variety; and there is, I believe, no metre which the language in

* Nov. 19, and Nov. 26, 1853.

other compositions has allowed and adopted, which does not find its occasional place here; the *ottava rima* and, as we have seen, even the sonnet itself is not excluded; nor yet other metres more elaborate still in the curious intricacy of their rhythmical arrangement.* At the same time the main staple and woof of the dialogue is the trochaic line of seven or eight syllables, in which the Spanish romances, and itself designated 'Romance,' are written. This which may be called pre-eminently the national metre, is constructed on a scheme altogether strange to our ears. One rhyme will run through the whole of a Spanish romance, or through some hundred lines of a Spanish play, recurring in every alternate line. But then this rhyme is not a full one, like ours, where consonants and vowels alike must correspond; but so long as the vowels rhyme, the consonants are free to do so or not, as may be found most convenient. Thus the *assonants*, as in Spanish these vowel rhymes are called, to distinguish them from full or *consonant* rhymes, being such as 'cr*uz*a*n*,' 'j*u*nt*a*s,' '*u*n*a*,' would be considered to rhyme with one another for the sake of the vowels *u*—*a* recurring in them all. It is as though we should allow 'raiment,' 'angel,' 'greater,' to rhyme on the ground of the recurring *a*—*e*; or 'fire,' 'mine,' 'right'

* On this subject Klein (*Das Span. Drama*, vol. iii. p. 523) may be consulted with profit.

(for the rhymes are not always double), on the strength of the long *i* in each.*

What, it may be asked, should an English translator do when this impalpable rhyme meets him in the face? One who undertakes to render a Spanish play into English, but who is deeply convinced of the intimate coherence between a poem's form and its spirit, and that one cannot be altered without at the same time most seriously affecting the other, is in a strait here. For him the metrical form of any poem which is worth the reading is not the garment which it wears, and as such exchangeable for another of a somewhat different pattern, but the flesh and blood which the inner soul of it has woven for itself, and which is a part of its proper life for ever. I expressed myself in the first edition of this essay to the effect that he had nothing else to do but to render the Spanish trochaic assonants into English lines of exactly the same construction; and I proved the sincerity of my conviction that this was the right thing to do by what I did myself. I should hardly express myself with the same confidence now. The thing itself is not very difficult; at any rate it presents no difficulties which a fair amount of patience and labour, with a reasonable command over the resources of the lan-

* See a good account of the Spanish assonants and their origin in Lord Holland's *Lope de Vega*, vol. ii. pp. 215–222.

guage, will not overcome. But unfortunately when the task is accomplished, at least with any such skill as I could command, the assonant, however it may sound in the Spanish, makes in English no satisfying music or melody to the ear.

No doubt the verses are better for this ghost and shadow of a rhyme than they would have been without it; and in the long run and in the total impression which a passage leaves behind it, the assonant certainly makes itself felt. Still there is a poverty about the English vowel rhyme to the English ear, which has not been trained to watch for it, and which for a long while fails to detect it. Add to this that so many English vowels being shut, while Spanish are mostly open, there is much less to mark the rhyme in English than in Spanish; not to say further that in every case of the double or feminine rhyme, the second vowel in English must almost of necessity be *e*, that is, the vowel with the slightest sound of all; words in *a—a*, as *aga*te and p*alac*e, or *o—o*, as c*onc*ord and f*orem*ost, or in any other combination but *a—e*, *e—e*, *i—e*, *o—e*, or *u—e*, being too few to allow of those assonants being chosen.*

* Schlegel, Gries, and Malsburg, Schack, Eichendorff, and all who have attempted to transfer the poets of Southern Europe into the language of Germany, have invariably employed the assonant where they have found it in their originals. It is not *quite* so strange with them as with us, seeing that, although quite a modern invention, it has been occasionally used by German poets in com-

Many translators, ill-satisfied with the results which can in this way be produced, have cast their translations into other metrical forms; it may be into our usual dramatic blank verse, or sometimes into some form which shall be a compromise between this and that other which they have not ventured to follow. They have generally fallen back on blank verse. Yet granting all the merit of the iambic, long ago by Aristotle declared to be the proper metre for dramatic dialogue,* as most resembling talk, what could be more unlike one another than the slow and somewhat stately movement of our dramatic verse, and the quick lyric dance of the Spanish assonants, short trochaics of seven or eight syllables in length? while the portions of Calderon's plays written in full consonant

positions of their own, as by Frederic Schlegel in his *Alarcos*, and by Tieck in his *Octavian*. Yet there also it has found earnest resistance; the same charges have been brought against it to which it is evidently exposed with us; and it is very doubtful whether it has really established itself, whether it is there more than an exotic; not adopted, but only tolerated as a matter of necessity, in the rendering of Spanish or Portuguese poetry. There is an elaborate defence of the employment of this short trochaic verse for the turning of Calderon into German on the part of Count Malsburg, in the *Preface* to the first volume of his excellent version of certain plays of Calderon, *Schauspiele d. Calderon*, p. xxxvii. A foreigner is hardly in a position to judge of the effects which may thus be produced in a language which is not his own; but I cannot refrain from saying that it seems to me almost as alien to the genius of the German language as to that of our own, and nearly as unsatisfying to the ear in the one as in the other.

* See his *Poetics*, iv.

rhymes, and they are very considerable, the most carefully finished, and the most richly poetical, appear still less like themselves when stripped of their rich recurrence of similar sounds, their often curiously interlaced rhymes; when clothed throughout in this same uniform dress, with all the rhythmical distinctions between one part and another obliterated wholly. Shelley felt so strongly the fatal consequences of rendering those parts of his original which are thus steeped in the music of their rhymes into our blank verse, his poetic sense so far revolted against this, that, however he may have rendered the assonants in our blank dramatic verse, those portions at least he clothes in rhyme, irregular indeed, while the utmost regularity reigns in the original, but yet of a rare grace and beauty. For the most part, however, translators who employ blank verse employ it throughout; it passes like a heavy roller over all, levelling all, and often crushing all. It is difficult to conceive any completer transformation than that which Calderon thus undergoes, even where a translation fairly fulfils all other requirements to which it is bound.

After full consideration I have arrived at the conclusion that the best hope of bringing some sort of knowledge of Calderon to those who cannot read him in his native Castilian, is through an accurate prose translation; and a recent admirable rendering into

French of several of his best pieces goes far to confirm me in this opinion. Of course much, very much is gone, and without compensations so much as attempted; and this poet, who is nearly as much lyrical as dramatic, would hardly know himself in the new garment which thus he wears; but with all this, and much as will have perished, some very distinct impressions of his greatness and power will not fail to reach the understanding reader.

I find here in this difficulty of reproducing him in an adequate English form, not the entire, but a quite sufficient, explanation of the little popularity which Calderon has ever enjoyed in England, of the little which he is ever likely to enjoy. The translator is in a manner shut in to failure; and this, even supposing him to be in other respects sufficiently equipped for the task which he has undertaken. Of course it will have happened with these translators, as with any other body of verse-writers, that some will have mistaken their powers, will have manifestly been inadequately furnished with the technical skill which their task demanded; and their deficiency in this will have been quite enough to account for their ill-success, without seeking the causes of it further. Yet this by no means has been the case with all. Many have displayed abundant grace and poetry and feeling, with mastery of their own language and of that from

which they were translating,—even where they have not taken, as it seems to me, the best course for the overcoming of the difficulties before them. Thus many years ago there was a series of well-written analyses of plays of Calderon, with large passages translated, in *Blackwood's Magazine*: see, for example, Dec. 1839; May 1857; June 1876. Others are scattered up and down in our periodical literature; thus a solid and scholarly, though not very poetical, translation of *Life's a Dream* appeared in *The Monthly Magazine*, 1842, Nos. 549—551; and an analysis in *Fraser's Magazine*, Aug. 1849, of *The Three Greatest Prodigies*; and in the same, Feb. 1879, of *The Wonder-working Magician*.

Probably the noble but unfinished fragments of this last play, which show that Shelley did yield himself in part to the temptation of which elsewhere he speaks (see p. 111), are that by which Calderon is known the best to English readers. They are however too few and too fragmentary to afford more than a glimpse of that poet about whom Shelley spoke with so passionate an enthusiasm;* and probably, had they received the last touch of his hand, they would not have

* Add to other passages in which he utters his admiration, already quoted or referred to in this volume, a letter to Mrs. Gisborne, of date Nov. 16, 1819, in Shelley's *Essays*, &c., 1874, p. 137.

appeared altogether in their present shape. It may be permitted also to doubt whether Shelley was not rather learning his Spanish as he went forward with his translation, than bringing to his task a Spanish already learned. *Justina*, by J. H. 1848, is another rendering of the same play. The writer appears unaware of Shelley's previous version of some of its scenes, and hardly possesses that command of the resources of the English language, which none more than a translator of Calderon requires. *Six Dramas of Calderon freely translated*, by Edward Fitzgerald, 1853, are a very important contribution to the knowledge of the Spanish poet; written as they are in English of an exquisite purity and vigour, and dealing with poetry in a poet's spirit. Mr. Fitzgerald has with an untimely modesty chosen plays which, always excepting the noble *Mayor of Zalamea*, cannot be said to rank among Calderon's greatest, being rather effective melodramas than works of highest art. He does this with the observation, 'Such plays as the *Magico Prodigioso* and the *Vida es Sueño* require another translator and, I think, form of translation.' In respect of 'form of translation' I am compelled to agree with him, his version being for the most part in English blank verse; but how little likely Calderon is to obtain a more gifted translator, and how much his modest choice of plays on which to exercise his skill,

which are not among his author's best, is to be regretted, I think the reader will own after a single quotation from this volume :—

'He who far off beholds another dancing,
Even one who dances best, and all the time
Hears not the music that he dances to,
Thinks him a madman, apprehending not
The law that rules his else eccentric action.
So he that's in himself insensible
Of love's sweet influence, misjudges him
Who moves according to love's melody :
And knowing not that all these sighs and tears,
Ejaculations, and impatiences,
Are necessary changes of a measure
Which the divine musician plays, may call
The lover crazy, which he would not do,
Did he within his own heart hear the tune
Played by the great musician of the world.'*

There followed this in the same year (1853) another selection under the title, *Dramas of Calderon translated from the Spanish*, by Denis Florence M'Carthy. The preface contains some very serviceable literary notices recording what had been already done for Calderon in England. Other later contributions which Mr. M'Carthy has since made to the knowledge of Calderon, show to my mind a very marked advance upon these in their manner of meeting, and in part at

* For the original, see *Comedias*, vol. iv. p. 68.

least mastering, the immense difficulties which this poet offers to a translator. Thus in a second volume published in 1861 he has not shrunk from grappling with those which the *autos* present, and beside other renderings there is the version here of one of these, namely, *The Sorceries of Sin*; while in a third volume (1867) he has completely rendered, and with no slight success, two more of these. Last of all among the interpreters of Calderon is Miss Hasell, whose little volume on the poet (1879) finds a place in the *Series of Foreign Classics for English Readers.* She has not wholly overcome, any more than others who went before her have done, what I must regard as the insuperable difficulties which cling to the task she undertook; but much of the 'mind and art' of Calderon may be learned from the book, which has many scenes very gracefully rendered, with singularly skilful analyses of some among the best of his Mysteries and plays.

Thus far a critic of other men's attempts, I must now in turn expose to criticism my own.

## CHAPTER VI.

### TRANSLATIONS FROM CALDERON.—'LIFE'S A DREAM.'

*Life's a Dream* was first published in the year 1635; the year in which Lope died, and Calderon, as by true poetic succession, ascended the throne which the other had left vacant. In that year the brother of the poet published, with his sanction, a volume containing nine of his dramas, being the earliest authorized edition of any of his works; and this occupies the foremost place among them. If we suppose it to have been written not very long before, and it is certainly not one of his youthful attempts, it will then pertain to that period of his life when his imaginative and creative faculties were at the highest; his deepest devotional feelings belonging to a later period; it will also represent his diction at its best.

The inner meaning of this drama, and that which, elevating it above a mere tale of adventures, gives to it a higher significance, will hardly escape the thoughtful reader. Indeed the very name which it bears will put at once 'the key of knowledge' into his hands. The solemn sense of the nothingness of this life, as contrasted with the awful realities of eternity,

has often found its utterance under the image which this name at once suggests. That this life is only a dream, and eternity the waking, this has been often the theme of the earnest religious teacher; and many noble passages from Christian, and not Christian only, but heathen moralists as well, are the utterance of this truest thought. In this play of Calderon's we have the same thought finding its embodiment in the free region of art; its moral, although that is not forced upon the reader, being that this present life of ours, however it may be only such a dream, is yet one which it lies in our power to dream well or ill, and that, as our choice is for the one or for the other, even so will our awaking be:—

> 'Sogno della mia vita è il corso intero;
> Deh tu, Signor, quando a destarmi arrivo,
> Fa ch'io trovi riposo in sen del Vero.'

Not very many years ago, and as if to give a signal proof of the reality of the title borne by this play, and that life was indeed this dream, a Queen of Sweden expired in the theatre of Stockholm during its performance.

This truth, which in art has been often brought out on its comic, has been much seldomer on its more earnest side. The framework in which Shakespeare has set his *Taming of the Shrew* is, as is familiar to

all, such a comic transfer of a drunken tinker in his sleep to a nobleman's palace; with doubtless the intention on the poet's part, which however he has omitted to carry out, of bearing him back again to his rags and his alehouse so soon as the sport was exhausted, with a making of him there to believe that all which he had seen and lived was only a dream; the play itself being subordinated to this scheme, and properly only an interlude acted before him. There is a still earlier drama printed in the *Six Old Plays* dealing with the same subject; one also, as I have understood, *Jeppe paa Bierge*, by Holberg, the chief dramatic poet of Denmark. This drama of Calderon's, which deals with the more serious and solemn aspects of the same subject, has been a great favourite in Germany since the re-awakened interest in Calderon. It has been acted with remarkable success; and three or four times translated into German. I am only acquainted with one of these translations,* that of

* I do not count among these *Das Leben als ein Traum*, von D. F. H. W. M., Strassburg, 1750; the author of which does not seem to be aware that the play was originally Spanish. He has translated from an Italian translation, and the work, considering the double alembic which it has passed through, is not ill done; nor yet *Das menschliche Leben ist Traum*, von M. T. F. Scharfenstein, 1760; which also is an imitation at second hand. Neither is a play in Dutch, *Sigismundus Prinse van Polen, of Het Leeven is een Droom*, Amsterdam, 1705, a translation, though certainly founded upon Calderon. The same may be said of *Sigismond, duc de Varsau*, by Gillet de la Tissonerie, Paris, 1646. Boissy's *La*

Gries, which appears to me admirably done. As regards any English forerunners in my task, I have already alluded to a solid and vigorous translation of this play into English blank verse, which appeared in *The Monthly Magazine*, Nos. 549—551, 1842, by John Oxenford; its metrical form however would not allow it to attain any eminent success. Some passages also from *Life's a Dream* appeared in a small anonymous volume published in Edinburgh 1830, but by one evidently little accustomed to overcome the technical difficulties of verse. Far better than any of these is Mr. Denis M'Carthy's translation, not like mine of selected scenes and passages, but of the whole play. In comparison with this, I claim no more for mine than that it was an earlier attempt (1856). I know of no other efforts to introduce it to the English reader; save indeed that Mr. Hallam* has given a rapid account of the play; extending a certain toleration to it, and even bestowing upon it a qualified measure of approval. Not so J. L. Klein, of whom I have spoken more than once already. He devotes twenty angry pages to the exposing the

*Vie est un Songe*, Paris, 1732, I know only by name. Neither have I any nearer knowledge of Dahlgren's Swedish version or imitation, *Lifvet en Dröm*, Stockholm, 1858. Damas Hinard has a faithful prose translation, in his *Chefs-d'œuvre du Théâtre Espagnol*, vol. i. pp. 318–374; and Latour (1871) a later, which also is good.

* *Hist. of Literature*, vol. iii. pp. 534–537.

poverty of Calderon's conception and faultiness of execution.*

The scene opens in a wild and savage region of Poland. Rosaura, in man's attire, appears descending from the heights above. She is following to the court of Poland Astolfo, Duke of Muscovy; who, being engaged to her, and she only too far to him, is now seeking to wed Estrella his cousin, the niece, as he is the nephew, of Basilius, King of Poland. The king has no direct heir, and their rival claims being in this way reconciled, they will together succeed to his throne. Rosaura has lost her way in the mountain; her horse has broken from her, and she with her servant Clarin, the *gracioso* or clown of the play, are wandering at random, when they are attracted by a light glimmering in a cavern. Drawing closer they hear voices of lamentation with the clank of chains. Having advanced too far to retreat, they are compelled to overhear one who mourns over a captivity which has reached back to the hour of his birth. But to begin where Rosaura first catches a glimpse of the light—Mr. Hallam himself observes of these opening scenes that 'they are impressive and full of beauty, even now that we are become accustomed in excess to these theatrical wonders.' No one manages them more skilfully. In his hands they are often marvels of art:—

* *Das Span. Drama*, vol. iv. p. 445.

*Ros.* Did ever any such adventure meet!
Yet if mine eyesight suffers no deceit,
Which fancy plays on me,
By that faint glimmer day retains I see,
As I must needs believe,
A dwelling place.

*Clar.* Me too my hopes deceive,
Or I discern the same.

*Ros.* Amid these naked rocks the rugged frame
Peers of a lowly shed,
Timidly rearing towards the sun its head.
In such a rustic style
Shows the rude masonry of this wild pile,
That, at the bottom set
Of these tall mountainous summits which have met
The sun's great orb of light,
It seems a loosened crag, rolled from the upper height.

*Clar.* Let us approach it then;
For long enough we have gazed upon it, when
'Twere better we should try
If the good folk within would generously
Admit us.

*Ros.* Lo! the door
(Funereal jaws were name to suit it more)
Yawns, and the night forlorn
Thence issues, as in that deep centre born.
[*A clank of chains is heard.*

*Clar.* Hark! what is that I hear?

*Ros.* I am rooted to the spot, congealed with fear.

*Clar.* Is't not the clank of chains?

Sure, we have here a galley-slave in pains !
Well did my fears say so.

[*Sigismund is discovered within, clothed in skins.*

*Sig.* (*within*). Ah miserable me ! ah, woe, woe, woe !
*Ros.* List, what a doleful cry !
Clarin.
*Clar.* What would you, Lady ?
*Ros.* Let us fly
The terrors strange of this enchanted tower.
*Clar.* Nay, when it comes to this, I want the power.
*Ros.* Say, is not that a taper,
That feeble star, that weak and tremulous vapor,
Which with its pale rays crowned,
And shedding ineffectual ardours round,
Makes with a dubious light
Yet darker this dark dwelling-place of night ?
Yes ; for by that faint gleam
I can distinguish dimly what would seem
A prison-house obscure,
Which of a living corpse is sepulture :
And to enhance my fear,
In skins of beasts a man doth there appear,
With fetters fastly tied,
And only by that light accompanied.
Since flight would not avail,
Let us from this listen to his sad tale,
And all his story know.
*Sig.* Ah miserable me, ah, woe, woe, woe !
Heavens, why make ye me to mourn,
More than all men else forlorn ?
If my birth has been my sin,

Yet what sinned I more herein
Than others, who were also born?
Born the bird was, yet with gay
Gala vesture, beauty's dower,
Scarcely 'tis a wingèd flower,
Or a richly-plumaged spray,
Ere the aërial halls of day
It divideth rapidly,
And no more will debtor be
To the nest it hastes to quit;
But with more of soul than it,
I am grudged its liberty.
And the beast was born, whose skin
Scarce those beauteous spots and bars
Like to constellated stars,
Doth from its greater Painter win,
Ere the instinct doth begin
Of its fierceness and its pride,
And its lair on every side
It has measured far and nigh;
While with better instinct I
Am its liberty denied.
Born the mute fish was also,
Child of ooze and ocean weed;
Scarce a finny bark of speed
To the surface brought, and lo!
In vast circuits to and fro
Measures it on every side
All the waste of ocean wide,
Its illimitable home;
While with greater will to roam
I that freedom am denied.

Born the streamlet was, a snake,
Which unwinds the flowers among,
Silver serpent, that not long
May to them sweet music make,
Ere it quits the flow'ry brake,
Onward hastening to the sea
With majestic course and free,
Which the open plains supply;
While with more life gifted, I
Am denied its liberty.*

Those acquainted with the construction of Calderon's dramas will observe that he is here true to his ordinary plan of beginning with a scene which shall rouse curiosity; and only when he may have thus hoped to have secured the spectators' attention, does he proceed to the orderly unfolding of his plot. An involuntary exclamation of Rosaura's makes the captive aware of the two that are so close to him. His first impulse, when he discovers that he has been overheard in the hour of his weakness, is to destroy the listeners, however unintentional and unavoidable their listening may have been. Rosaura casts herself at his feet, and obtains his grace. But this is hardly so,

Calderon is fond of introducing into his dramas persons who have been brought up in absolute solitude, and then are suddenly cast upon the wild tumult of the world, and of dealing with the effects thus produced upon them. It has so come to pass that this situation with variations repeats itself in several of his plays; for example in *Echo and Narcissus*, and in *The Daughter of the Air*.

when they are interrupted by the entrance of Clotaldo, the most trusted servant of the Polish king, and the only person acquainted with the secret of this prisoner's condition, or with the causes of his life-long captivity. Clotaldo summons the guards of the tower, and the intruders are borne away, despite of Sigismund's furious remonstrance and the passionate outbreaks of his rage. They have incurred the penalty of death, pronounced against any who should approach the place where this prisoner was confined.

We have in the next scene the court of the king of Poland. The aged monarch, in solemn assembly of the chief estates of the realm, declares to Astolfo and to Estrella the conditions under which the inheritance of the kingdom may devolve on them. He narrates at length his addiction in former years to the science of astrology; and how he had dived deeply into the mysteries of the future. Though counted childless, he too had once a son; but reading at his birth his horoscope, he learned that this son should be fierce and ungovernable and cruel, and that he should himself one day lie prostrate at his feet. This son, whom he has feared to acknowledge, still lives—brought up in a remote tower, with only Clotaldo conscious of the secret. But now the father is touched with remorse, and repents of the cruelty with which he has sought to defeat the possible violence of his

son. He will bring him forth, and make proof of his disposition. These prophecies of the stars do but announce the inclination; they cannot impair the free will. Sigismund—for of course he and the captive of the first scene are the same—may overcome all the malignant influences of his stars; for men are not servile to their circumstances or their instincts, but it is their higher task to mould and fashion and conquer these. If he bear himself well in this trial, he shall be acknowledged as the heir; if otherwise, he shall be sent back to his dungeon, and Astolfo and Estrella shall inherit the kingdom. As now the secret is a secret no longer, and no motive for further concealment exists, the prisoners are easily pardoned; and Rosaura, who has resumed female attire, is taken into the train of Estrella. There is an underplot by which the latter becomes acquainted with Astolfo's previous engagement to Rosaura, which, graceful as it is, I yet shall not touch, as my purpose is only with the more earnest side of this drama. It has its bearing on the ultimate issue, as in consequence of the discovery, Estrella breaks off her engagement with the duke.

## ACT II.

In the first scene of this act Clotaldo declares to the king the manner in which he has carried out his purpose. In mercy to the young prince it has been

determined by his father that he shall be brought to the palace while under the influence of a sleeping potion; so that, should he prove unworthy, being borne back to his dungeon under the power of another, he may be persuaded that all the pomp and glory with which he was surrounded for a brief moment was indeed only a dream which he dreamed. There is something fine in Clotaldo's account of the manner in which he carried out this part of his monarch's plans. The passage is in assonants in the original, and therefore in the translation. The assonants employed are *e—e*, the weakest unfortunately of all our vowels; but the nearest possible approach which the language allows to the *e—a* of the original.

*Clo.* All, as thou commanded'st it,
Has been happily effected.
*King.* Say, Clotaldo, how it passed.
*Clo.* In this manner it succeeded.
With that mildly soothing draught,
Which thou badest should be tempered
With confections, mingling there
Of some herbs the influences,
Whose tyrannic strength and power,
And whose force that works in secret,
So the reason and discourse
Alienateth and suspendeth,
That it leaves the man who quaffs it
Than a human corpse no better,
And in deep sleep casting him

Robs him of his powers and senses—
With that potion in effect,
Where all opiates met together
In one draught, to Sigismund's
Narrow dungeon I descended.
There I spoke with him awhile
Of the human arts and letters,
Which the still and silent aspect
Of the mountains and the heavens
Him have taught—that school divine,
Where he has been long a learner,
And the voices of the birds
And the beasts has apprehended.
Then, that I might better raise
And exalt his spirit's temper
To the enterprize you aim at,
For my theme I took the fleetness
Of a soaring eagle proud,
Which, an overbold contemner
Of the lower paths of air,
To the sphere of fire ascended,
And like wingèd lightning there
Showed, or comet fiery-tressèd.
Then I hailed its lofty flight,
Saying, 'Thou in truth art empress
Of the birds, 'tis therefore just
That thou be o'er all preferrèd.'
But there was no need of more,
For if one of empire speaketh
But a word, with high-raised pride
Straightway he discourses ever;
For in truth his blood incites him,

That he fain would prove attempter
Of great things—and he exclaimed,
'In yon free and open heaven
Are there any then so base
That to serve they have consented?
This when I consider, then
My misfortunes solace yield me:
For at least if I *am* subject,
Such I am by force, not freely,
Since I never to another
Of freewill myself would render.'
When I saw him maddened thus
With these thoughts, the theme for ever
Of his griefs, I pledged him then
With the drugged cup; from the vessel
Scarcely did the potion pass
To his veins before he rendered
All his senses up to sleep—
Thro' his veins and all his members
Running such an icy sweat,
That had I not known the secret
Of his feigned death, for his life
I in verity had trembled.

In this lethargy he has been borne to the palace, like those whom Marco Polo tells of, that in a like condition were carried into the gardens of the Old Man of the Mountain; he has been placed amid all the splendour and magnificence of his father's royal apartments; and now they are only waiting the moment of his awaking. There are tokens that this has arrived,

and that he is approaching: the king and Clotaldo retire. Hardly have they done so, before Sigismund enters: servants are ministering to him, and he is full of wonder and admiration at the inexplicable change which has come over him; but, as will be seen presently, justifying all the previsions in respect of him; as indeed the king his father had taken means only too effectual that they should find their fulfilment. The scene, which is a long one, is yet full of dramatic spirit and vigour, and I will give its greater part.

*Sig.* Help me, heaven, what do I see?
Help me, heaven, what things are here?
Filling me with little fear,
But with much perplexity?
I in sumptuous palaces,
Costliest hangings round me spread,
I with servants compassèd,
Gay and glittering as these!
On a couch so rich and rare
I to waken suddenly,
With this retinue to me
Offering royal robes to wear!
Dream to call it, were deceit,
For myself awake I know;
I am Sigismund—even so.
Heavens, let no delusion cheat
Me, but say what this may be,
That has overcome me, while
Sleep my senses did beguile:
Is it truth or phantasy?

But what profit to debate,
And this idle coil to keep?
Best the present joy to reap,
And the future leave to fate.

*1st Ser.* What of sadness veils his brow!

*2nd Ser.* Who were not distraught, to whom
Should arrive such change of doom?

*Clar.* I for one.

*2nd Ser.* Speak to him now.

*1st Ser.* Wouldst thou they should sing again?

*Sig.* No, their singing pleases not.

*2nd Ser.* As thou wert so wrapped in thought,
We had hoped to soothe thy pain.

*Sig.* Not with melodies like these
I my sadness can assuage;
Nothing did mine ear engage
But those martial harmonies.

*Enter Clotaldo.*

*Clo.* Let your Highness, mighty Lord,
First give me your hand to kiss:
I must not the honour miss
First this homage to afford.

*Sig.* 'Tis Clotaldo! he who used
In my tower to treat me so;
Doth he now this homage show?
I am utterly confused!

*Clo.* With the strange perplexity
Growing from thy new estate,
Unto many doubts and great
Reason might exposèd be;
But I gladly thee would spare,

If I might, them all—and so
I would give thee, Sir, to know
Thou a prince art, Poland's heir.
And if until now thy state
Has been hidden and retired,
'Twas that it was thus required
By the menaces of fate,
Which pronounced a thousand woes
To this empire, if in it
Should the sovran laurel sit
Crowning thy imperial brows.
But relying on thine heed,
That thou wilt the stars o'ercome,
For not servile to his doom
Lives the valiant man indeed,
Thee from that thy cell forlorn,
While the might of deep sleep all
Thy wrapt senses did enthral,
They have to this palace borne.
But thy sire, the king my lord,
Will be here anon, and he
What is more will tell to thee.
*Sig.* But thou villain, wretch abhorred,
If I do mine own self know,
Know I not enough?—what more
Need I to be told, my power
And my pride of place to show?
How did'st thou to Poland dare
Act such treason, in despite
Of all reason and all right,
To me never to declare
What my birth was?—woe is thee!

Thus thou did'st the state betray,
Flatterer to thy monarch play,
Cruel tyrant unto me.
Thus for wrongs so strange and rare
Thee the state, the king, and I
Each and all condemn to die
By my hands.

*2nd Ser.* Sir—

*Sig.* Let none dare
Hindrance in my way to throw :
'Tis in vain : by heaven, I say,
If thou standest in my way,
From the window shalt thou go—

*2nd Ser.* Fly, Clotaldo.

*Clo.* Woe is thee !
Sigismund, what pride thou showest,
Nor that thou art dreaming knowest.

[*Clotaldo flies.*

*2nd Ser.* He did but—

*Sig.* No words for me !

*2nd Ser.* —with the king's commands comply.

*Sig.* But in an unrighteous thing
He should not obey the king ;
And besides, his prince am I.

Astolfo enters to pay his compliments in a set speech to the prince. Sigismund however cuts him short, and gives him so haughty and offensive a reception that after some few angry words he withdraws. Estrella enters on the same errand, whose hand he seizes, and to whom he pays such violent compli-

ments, that the same servant who was so forward before, and who knows that Astolfo is looking on at a little distance, interferes, and reminds Sigismund that it is not right so to behave to the affianced bride of another.

*Sig.* All this causes me disgust ;
Nothing appears right to me,
When against my phantasy.
*2nd Ser.* But alone in what is just
By thyself I heard it said
It was fitting to obey.
*Sig.* And you also heard me say
Who in me displeasure bred,
From the balcony should go.
*2nd Ser.* But that feat with such an one
As myself were scarcely done.
*Sig.* That we very soon will know.

[*Seizes him, and they go out struggling; the rest follow. Enter Astolfo.*

*Ast.* What do I to see arrive ?
*Est.* Haste, if you his life can save.
*Sig.* (*within*). There, the sea may be his grave.

[*He re-enters.*

I could do it, as I live.

*Enter the King.*

*King.* What has been ?
*Sig.* Not any thing.
A fellow that was vexing me
I tumbled from that balcony.

*Cla.* Have a care; it is the king.
*King.* From thy coming, O my son,
Must a death so soon ensue?
*Sig.* But he said I could not do
That which I have fairly done.
*King.* Prince, it brings me sorrow great,
When I hither did repair,
Thinking to have found thee ware,
Triumphing o'er stars and fate,
There has been such savage pride
Thus in thy demeanour seen,
That thy foremost act has been
A most grievous homicide.
With what feeling can I now
Round thy neck mine arms entwine,
Knowing the proud folds of thine
Have been taught so lately how
To give death? Who, drawing near,
Sees a dagger on the ground
Bare, that gave a mortal wound,
And can keep from feeling fear?
Or who sees the bloody spot
Where they slew another man,
And to nature's instinct can
Help replying, shuddering not?
I then, who in thine arms see
Of this death the instrument,
And the spot see, blood-besprent,
From thine arms am fain to flee,
And although I purposèd
For thy neck a fond embrace,
Will without it leave this place,

Having of thine arms just dread.

*Sig.* Well—I can without it fare,
As I *have* fared until now.
For a father who to show
Harshness such as this could bear,
Me has like a wild beast bred,
Driven me wholly from his side,
And all nurture has denied,
Would have gladly seen me dead,
It import but little can
That he will not now bestow
His embrace, who robbed me so
Of my being as a man.

*King.* Oh that heaven had thought it good
I had ne'er given that to thee!
Then thy pride I should not see,
Should not mourn thy savage mood.

*Sig.* I should not of thee complain,
Hadst thou never given me it,
But that given, thou didst think fit
To resume thy gift again:
For though giving is well named
Deed that honour high doth bring,
Yet to give is meanest thing,
When the gift again is claimed.

*King.* These then are thy thanks to me,
That of poor and wretched thrall
Thou a prince art?

*Sig.* What at all
Owe I here of thanks to thee,
O thou cruel tyrant hoar?
Old if thou and doting art,

Dying, what dost thou impart?—
Aught that was not mine before?
Thou my father art and king;
Then must nature's law to me
All this pomp and majesty
By its ordinances bring.
Though I am then in this case,
Owe I nothing to thine hand;
Rather might account demand
For the freedom and due place
Thou hast robbed me of till now.
Therefore rather thank thou me,
That I reckon not with thee,
While my debtor provest thou.

*King.* Arrogant and bold thou art;
To its word heaven sets its seal:
To the same heaven I appeal,
Oh thou proud and swoln of heart.
Though thyself thou now dost know,
Counting no delusion near,
Though thou dost in place appear
Where as foremost thou dost show,
Yet from me this counsel take
That thou play a meeker part,
For perchance thou dreaming art,
Though thou seemest thus awake.

[*Exit.*

*Sig.* That perhaps I dream, although
To my own self I may seem
Waking;—but I do not dream,
What I was and am I know;
And howe'er thou may'st repent,

Little help that yields thee now :
Know I now myself, and thou
With thy sorrow and lament
Canst not this annul, that I
Born am heir to Poland's crown.
If aforetime I bowed down
To my dungeon's misery,
'Twas that knowledge I had none
Of my state ; but now I know
This, and mine own self also,
Man and beast combined in one.

Presently Rosaura enters in search of her mistress, and finds herself unawares in Sigismund's presence. They recognize one another with a mutual perplexity ; he is taken with her beauty, and in this language expresses his admiration. I need hardly observe for the understanding the first compliment of the prince that *estrella* in Spanish is 'star.'

*Sig.* Fair woman, who art thou ?
*Ros.* (*aside*). I must remain
To him unknown ;—Sir, in Estrella's train
A most unhappy maid.
*Sig.* Not so—the sun say rather, by whose aid
That star continues bright,
Since from thy rays it ever draws its light.
I in the kingdom sweet,
Where the fair squadrons of the garden meet,
The goddess rose have seen
Elected as the loveliest for their queen.
And 'mid the jewels fine,

The rich assemblage sparkling in the mine,
The diamond ruled as lord,
To whom, as brightest, empire all accord.
And in heaven's brilliant court,
Whither the senate of the stars resort,
I saw that Hesper owned
The chiefest station, royally enthroned.
And at the great sun's call
When the bright planets are assembled all,
He over all had sway,
And reigned the lordliest oracle of day.
Then how, if ever the most beauteous owns
First place 'mid planets, flowers, and stars, and stones,
Hast thou obeyed the less,
Who art in thy transcendant loveliness,
And showing fairest far,
At once sun, planet, diamond, rose and star?

In a little however Sigismund, leaving these high-flown compliments, detains her so rudely, that Clotaldo, who has anxiously followed her into the prince's presence, is obliged to come forward and interfere for her release. The prince, enraged at the interruption, flings him at his feet, and a second time attempts his life. Rosaura runs out, crying for help, and Astolfo, summoned by her cries, seeks to protect the old man, when Sigismund turns upon him, and Astolfo is obliged to draw also to protect his life. The king, attracted by the tumult, enters, and again expostulates

with his son. He answers upbraiding with upbraiding. Why should he have respect to the grey hairs of Clotaldo, when those of his father shall lie one day at his feet? With this defiance Sigismund goes out. It is now acknowledged by all that nothing can be done with him, but to replace him in his former dungeon once more. At the earliest opportunity, that is, when next he desires to drink, the second sleeping potion shall be given him. Here let me pause to observe that we should entirely miss the true point of view from which it was the poet's intention that we should regard his work, if all our sympathies were with the father, and against Sigismund. His resentment on account of his deprivation of all that humanizing culture which was his right as a man cannot be regarded as unnatural nor unjust, little as he may have been justified in his manner of displaying it. Feuerbach —not the atheist, but his father, and an eminent writer on criminal jurisprudence—has composed a memoir on Gaspar Hauser, whose actual history so much resembled that which Calderon has here imagined,* with this title, *Kaspar Hauser, Beispiel eines Verbrechens am Seelenleben.* Here also such an

* That is, supposing the whole account which he gave of himself was not an imposture and the wound of which he died inflicted by his own hand, although one which he had no intention should prove mortal. Feuerbach, however, a man little likely to be imposed on, was convinced of the truth of his story.

offence against the higher life of a soul had been committed, and it was only just that it should be avenged.

We must conclude that what had been agreed on has been done ; for in the next scene Sigismund is again in his tower, clothed with skins and fastened with a chain as before. The scene is a noble one ; I can only hope that its beauty, especially that of its concluding soliloquy, has not wholly evaporated in the process of emptying from vessel to vessel. Clotaldo and servants, among whom is Clarin, have brought him thither.

*Clo.* Lay your burden on this floor,
For to-day must end his pride,
Where it started.
*Ser.* I have tied
His fetter as it was before.
*Clar.* Never, never any more
Waken, Sigismund, to see
Thy reverse of destiny :
Like a shadow with no stay,
Like a flame that dies away,
Vanishing thy majesty !
*Clo.* One who such moralities
Vents, should never lack a place
Where he may have ample space
And leisure to discourse at ease :
This is he whom ye must seize,
Let him here continue bound.
*Clar.* But me wherefore ?

*Clo.* When are found
Secrets grave to clarion known,
We guard it safe, lest they be blown,
If the clarion once should sound.
*Clar.* But me—wherefore bind me thus?
At my father's life did I
Aim? or from that balcony
Did I, fierce and tyrannous,
Fling that little Icarus?
[*They take him away. Enter the King, disguised.*
*King.* Clotaldo?
*Clo.* Does your majesty
Thus in this disguise appear?
*King.* Foolish yearnings draw me here,
And a mournful wish to see
How it fares (ah, woe is me!)
With my son.
*Clo.* Behold him shorn
Of his glory, and forlorn,
In his woful first estate.
*King.* Prince, alas! unfortunate,
Under stars malignant born;
Rouse him from his lethargy,
Now that all his strength has sunk
With the opiate that he drunk.
*Clo.* He is slumbering restlessly,
And he speaks.
*King.* What dreameth he?
Let us listen.
*Sig.* (*speaking in his sleep*). What is this?
He a righteous ruler is,

Who the tyrants doth chastise.
By my hand Clotaldo dies,
And my feet my sire shall kiss.

*Clo.* With my death he threatens me.

*King.* Me with outrage and with wrong.

*Clo.* He means my life shall not be long.

*King.* Me at his feet he means to see.

*Sig.* Let my valour proud and free
On the world's broad stage be found
With a peerless glory crowned:
That my vengeance full may be,
O'er his sire let all men see
Triumphing king Sigismund. [*He wakens.*
But, alas! where am I, where?

*King.* Me he must not look upon:
Thou wilt do what needs be done,
While I yonder will repair.

[*The King retires.*

*Sig.* Can it be then I that bear,
Prisoned here, this fetter's weight?
I in this forlorn estate?
Yea, and is not this dark room,
Help me, heaven! my former tomb?
I have dreamed strange things of late.

*Clo.* I must now my station take,
And my part allotted play. [*Aside.*
It is time to wake, I say.

*Sig.* Yea, time is it to awake.

*Clo.* Wilt thou not this whole day break
Thy deep slumber? Is it so
That since I that eagle's slow
Flight pursued and path sublime,

Leaving you, in all this time
You have never wakened?

*Sig* No,
Nor yet now awake am I;
For, Clotaldo, as it seems
I am still involved in dreams;
Nor this deem I erringly,
For if that I *did* espy
Sure and certain, was a dream,
That I now see doth but seem.

*Clo.* What your dream was might I know?

*Sig.* I awoke from sleep, and lo!
'Twas upon a gorgeous bed
With bright colours picturèd
(Ah! the cruel flattery),
Rich as that flowered tapestry
Which on earth the spring has spread.
Many nobles in my sight
Humbly bending, gave me name
Of their prince, to serve me came
With rich jewels, vestments bright,
Till thou changed'st to delight
That suspense which held me bound,
Uttering the joyful sound,
That though now I this way fare,
I was Poland's rightful heir.

*Clo.* Welcome good I must have found.

*Sig.* None so good—I drew my sword,
Thee a traitor fiercely named,
Twice to take thy life I aimed.

*Clo.* How should I be so abhorred?

*Sig.* I was then of all the lord,

And revenge on all I sought.
Only a woman in me wrought
Love, which was no dream I trow,
For all else has ended now,
This alone has ended not.

[*The King goes out.*

*Clo.* He has moved the king to weep,
Who has from his post retired. [*Aside.*
Thou wast by our talk inspired
Of that eagle ; thus thy sleep
Did the same lordly current keep :
Yet in dreams it were well done,
Sigismund, to honour one
Who has watched and loved thee so,
Since good does not perish, though
It be wrought in dream alone. [*Exit.*

*Sig.* Truth—and let us then restrain
This the fierceness of our pride,
Lay this wilfulness aside,
Lest perchance we dream again :
And we shall so, who remain
In a world of wonder thrown,
Where to live and dream are one.
For experience tells me this,
Each is dreaming what he is,
Till the time his dream is done.
The king dreams himself a king,
And in this conceit he lives,
Lords it, high commandment gives,
Till his lent applause takes wing,
Death on light winds scattering,
Or converting (oh, sad fate !)

Into ashes all his state :
How can men so lust to reign,
When to waken them again
From their false dream death doth wait?
And the rich man dreams no less
'Mid his wealth that brings more cares,
And the poor man dreams he bears
All his want and wretchedness ;
Dreams, whom anxious thoughts oppress,
Dreams, who for high place contends.
Dreams, who injures and offends ;
And though none are rightly ware,
All are dreaming that they are
In this life, until death ends.
I am dreaming I lie here,
Laden with this fetter's weight,
And I dreamed that I of late
Did in fairer sort appear.
What is life? a frenzy mere ;
What is life? e'en that we deem ;
A conceit, a shadow all,
And the greatest good is small,
Nothing is, but all things seem,
Dreams within dreams, still we dream.*

*The Scene closes.*

## ACT III.

We have reached the third and concluding act. Sooner, perhaps, than Sigismund expected, he is to

* In the *auto* bearing the same name (vol. iv. p. 29) there is a fine variation of the concluding part of this scene.

dream again. A great part of the army and the people, learning that there is a rightful heir to the throne, rise in insurrection against an arrangement which should give the crown to any other. They care nothing for the prophecy of the stars; and, finding their way to the place of Sigismund's confinement, burst into his dungeon, and demand that he should place himself at their head, and conquer for himself a throne. His perplexity at this new dream which he is summoned to dream is finely drawn; but Clotaldo's word of warning, that he have respect to the awakening, and the discipline which he has undergone, have not been wholly thrown away. To their loud and tumultuous homage,—

> Long live Sigismund our king,

he answers—

> Must I dream again of glories
> (Is your pleasure so, high heavens),
> Oh how soon to be dissolvèd?
> Will you that again encompassed
> With those phantom shapes to mock me,
> I behold my kingly state
> Of the wind dispersed and broken?
> Must I my sad lesson learn
> Once again? again discover
> To what perils mortal power
> Lives its whole life long exposèd?
> No, it shall not, shall not be:
> To my destiny behold me

Subject now ; and having learned
That this life a dream is wholly,
Hence, I say, vain shapes, pretending
To possess a voice and body,
Cheating my dull sense, and having
In good truth nor one nor other.
I desire not borrowed greatness,
Nor imaginary glories,
Pomps fantastical, illusions,
With the faintest breath that bloweth
Of the light wind perishing :
As the buds and bloom disclosèd
By the flow'ring almond tree,
With such timeless haste unfolded,
That the first breath dims their brightness,
Tarnishing and staining wholly
All the light and loveliness
Which its roseate tresses boasted.*
Now I know, I know ye now,
And I know there falls no other

* The twelve lines of which this is the last are so graceful in the original that I must needs add them in a note.

Que no quiero magestades
Fingidas, pompas no quiero
Fantásticas, illusiones,
Que al soplo menos ligero
Del aura han de deshacerse,
Bien como el florido almendro,
Que por madrugar sus flores
Sin aviso y sin consejo,
Al primer soplo se apagan,
Marchitando y desluciendo
De sus rosados capillos
Belleza, luz y ornamento.

Lot to every one that dreams ;
Cheats avail with me no longer ;
Undeceived now know I surely
That our life a dream is only.

*Sold.* If thou thinkest we deceive thee,
Turn thine eyes that way, to yonder
Proud acclivity, and see
Multitudes that wait to offer
Homage unto thee.

*Sig.* Already
I the same things have beholden
Just as clearly and distinctly
As at this time I behold them,
Yet was it a dream.

*Sold.* Sir, ever
Great events have sent before them
Their announcements : dreamt you this,
It was surely such an omen.

*Sig.* 'Tis well said ; such omen was it.
Yet since life so quickly closes,
Let us, or in truth or falsehood,
Dream once more—this not forgotten,
That we must at fittest hour
Wake again, life's brief joy over ;
For that known, the undeception
Will not prove so sad nor costly.
Then, premising only this,
That this power, if true, belongeth
Not to us, but merely lent is,
To return unto its Owner,
Let us venture upon all.—
Vassals, my best thanks acknowledge

Your true fealty. See in me
One whose valour and whose boldness
From a foreign yoke shall free you.
Sound to arms, and in brief moment
Ye my courage high shall witness;
I against my father boldly
Wage this battle, and the word
Will make true, which heaven has spoken,
At my feet beholding him.
But lest this my dream be over,
That not done, best hold my peace,
Lest I prove an empty boaster.

*All.* Long live Sigismund our king!

*Enter Clotaldo.*

*Clo.* Ha! what noise? my life is forfeit.

*Sig.* You, Clotaldo?

*Clo.* Sire?—on me
Will his whole wrath fall.

*Clar.* I wonder
If he'll fling him down the rocks.

*Clo.* At your royal feet behold me,
That it is to die I know.

*Sig.* Rise, my father—kneel no longer,
Rise to be the guide and pole-star
By the which I shape my projects;
For by your great loyalty
Was my helpless childhood fostered.
Give me your embrace.

*Clo.* What say you?

*Sig.* That I dream, and would act nobly,
Since well doing is not lost
Though it be in dreams done only.

*Clo.* Then, sir, if it be your blazon
To do well, that I with boldness
Crave of you the same permission,
Cannot for a fault be noted.
Arms you wield against your sire,
I can neither counsel offer,
Nor lend aid against my king.
See me prostrated before thee.
Kill me, if thou wilt.

*Sig.* Ha, villain!
Ingrate!—but 'tis need I govern
And in meekness rule my soul.
For his true estate who knoweth?
To your loyalty, Clotaldo,
Owe I envy, praise and wonder;
Go and serve your lord and king;
We shall meet in battle shortly.
But for you, now sound to arms.

*Clo.* My best thanks this grace acknowledge.
[*Exit.*

*Sig.* Destiny, we go to reign;
Wake I, let not sleep come o'er me;
Sleep I, do not waken me.
But well doing most imports me,
Be it thus or thus—if truth,
For the truth's sake; if the other,
To win friends against the time
When this fleeting dream is over.
[*They go out, sounding alarums.*

Presently comes another struggle with temptation. Sigismund is advancing against the capital of his

father, and Rosaura, at his approach, flees to him as her champion, who shall compel her faithless lover to do her right. Along with the temptation there goes also a new and deeper confusion, for she was one of the persons of his former dream. He discourses thus :—

> Help me, heaven, that I may learn
> From these doubts to issue wholly,
> Or not muse on them at all.
> Who has known such doubtful torments?
> If I dreamt that majesty
> Whereof lately I was owner,
> How doth now this woman give me
> Of that time such certain tokens?
> Then it was a truth, no dream ;
> But if truth, which is another
> And no less perplexity,
> How do my life's following courses
> Name it dream? then so resembling
> Unto dreams are this world's glories,
> It will happen many times
> That the true for false are holden,
> And the false accounted true ;
> These so little from those other
> Differing, that 'tis hard to know
> If what felt is and beholden
> Be a falsehood, be a truth :
> To the original the copy
> So resembles, that a question
> Which the true is rises often.

Then if this be thus, and all
Of our majesty and glory,
Of our pomp and pride and greatness,
Must in shadows vanish wholly,
Let us hasten to improve
What is ours, the instant moment.
Let us snatch a present joy,
While a dream no future knoweth.
In my power Rosaura is,
And my soul her charms adoreth :
Let me seize then this occasion
Which unto my feet has borne her.
This a dream is ; then delights
Let us dream of for the moment,
Pain will track them swiftly after.
But I do confute mine own self
With the reasons I advance.
If a dream, an empty glory,
Who for empty glory here
Would a heavenly glory forfeit ?
What past good is not a dream ?
Who has tasted blisses lofty,
And says not, as oft as these are
In his memory revolvèd,
Doubtless I have dreamed it all,
Which I saw :—But if my knowledge
Tells me this, and if desire
Is a flame that brightly gloweth,
Yet is turned to dead cold ashes
By the wind that breathes the softest,
Let us then the eternal aim at,
Fame that no decreases offers,

Blisses that not ever slumber,
Majesty that ne'er reposes.

He breaks off the dangerous interview, and bids sound to arms. Presently the armies join battle, the old king is overthrown, and his routed army scattered in confused flight. The poor *gracioso*, Clarin, has now a tragic part assigned to him, and one very characteristic of Calderon's skill in making all parts and persons of his drama work together for one effect. He conceals himself among the rocks, in a place, as he boasts, of such entire security, that no danger can possibly find him out. The king presently appears, with Astolfo and others, also flying; shots are fired from behind, and the poor clown drops from his place of concealment, mortally wounded, at the king's feet. To the question, Who is he? he has strength to reply that he is one who, seeking to avoid death, has found it; who has fulfilled in himself that destiny which he thought most certainly to defeat, and this by the very means which he took to defeat it.* The lesson is not thrown away upon the king. The pursuers are upon him and his company; they enter, Sigismund and his troops. After a momentary attempt at concealment, the king comes forth from his hiding-place, throws himself at his son's feet, and the menace of the stars is accomplished—here also, by the very means em-

* Curiously enough, and certainly with a lack of insight strange on his part, Mr. Lewes denounces this as a gratuitous horror.

ployed to defeat it. Let us see how Calderon manages this concluding scene :—

*Sold.* In this intricate wilderness,
Somewhere in its thickest tangles
The king hides himself.
*Sig.* Pursue him,
Till not one bush has remainèd
Which you have not throughly searchèd,
All its trunks and all its branches.
*Clo.* Fly, Sir.
*King.* Wherefore should I fly?
*Ast.* Sire, what mean you?
*King.* Prince, unhand me.
*Clo.* What, Sir, would you?
*King.* Use, Clotaldo,
That sole help which yet avails me.—
Prince, if thou art seeking me,
At thy feet behold me fallen.
Let the snow of these white hairs
Serve unto thee as a carpet;
Set thy foot upon my neck,
On my crown, my glory trample.
Serve thyself of me thy captive,
And, all cares and cautions baffled,
Let the stars fulfil their threat'nings,
Heaven accomplish what is fated.
*Sig.* Princes, nobles, Court of Poland,
Who of these unequalled marvels
Are the witnesses, your prince
Speaks unto you—therefore hearken.
That which is of heaven determined,

That which on its azure tablets
God has with his finger written,
Who those broad and skiey pages,
Pranked with all their golden cyphers,
Makes his solemn scroll and parchment,
That doth never falsely play:
It is he alone plays falsely,
Who injuriously to use them,
Their hid mysteries unravels.
Thus my father, who is here,
That he might escape the madness
Of my nature, did for this
In man's shape a wild beast make me,
In such fashion that when I,
By the gentle blood that races
In my veins, my noble state,
By such nurture as became me,
Might, of good hope, have approved me
Mild and docile; yet that manner
Of my wild and savage rearing
Was alone sufficient amply
To have brutalized my soul.
Oh fair way to shun the danger!
Were it to a man fore-uttered,
Some inhuman beast will slay thee,
Would he choose, such prophecy
That he might defeat, to waken
Beasts that he perchance found sleeping.
Were it said, the sword thou bearest
Sheathed, shall prove the very one
Which shall be thy death, O vainest
Method to annul the threat,

From that hour to bear it naked,
With its point against his bosom.
Were it said, the gulfs of water,
Building silver tombs above thee,
For thy sepulchre are fated,
'Twere ill done to brave the wild waves,
When the indignant sea in anger
Lifted hills of snowy foam,
Mountainous heights of crystal raised.
With my sire the same thing fortuned,
As with one who should awaken
The wild beast that threatened him ;
As with one who bared the dagger
He most feared ; or to sea-tomb
Doomed, the stormiest oceans challenged.
When my fury might have proved
Like a sleeping beast (now hearken),
And my fierceness a sheathed sword,
And my pride a tranquil calmness,
Yet no destiny by wrong
Or unrighteousness is baffled,
Rather these will more provoke it :
So that he who means to master
Fate, with gentleness must do it,
With meek wisdom, not with harshness.
Let for an example serve
This rare spectacle, this strangest
Prodigy, most wonderful
Sight of all ; for what were stranger
Than to have arrived to see,
After such preventions taken,
At my feet a father prostrate,

In the dust a monarch fallen?
'Twas the sentence of high heaven,
Which for all he strove to baffle,
Yet he could not; and could I,
Less in all things, hope to master,
Less in valour, and in years,
And in wisdom?—O my father,
Thy hand reach me; Sire, arise;
Now that heaven this way has made thee
See thou erred'st in the mode
Of o'ercoming it, I place me
Here, awaiting thy revenge:
On my neck thy feet be planted.

He throws himself at his father's feet, having now, indeed, conquered; for he has conquered himself. All else is arranged in a few lines. Astolfo fulfils his pledge to Rosaura, the Prince affectionately embraces the faithful Clotaldo, gives his own hand to Estrella, and, when all are wondering at his wisdom and moderation, bids them to restrain their admiration. He has learned his lesson, and even if he should not waken to find himself in his narrow dungeon again, yet *Life* itself as he now perceives it *is a Dream*, which he would fain dream well, that so a blessed awakening may follow.

## CHAPTER VII.

### 'THE GREAT THEATRE OF THE WORLD.'

WHEN this Essay was published first, I could say that up to that date, namely 1856, no *auto* of Calderon had been translated into English either in whole or in part. Ticknor indeed had presented, in his *History of Spanish Literature*, an account of one, *The Divine Orpheus*,* but wholly in prose; and in prose also *The Rambler*, Dec. 1855, has given a very fair analysis of another, *The Poison and the Antidote.* It is not at the present altogether so; nor am I treading now on ground wholly untrodden by any who have gone before me (see p. 151); though I do not feel that for myself the difficulties and dangers besetting my task are seriously diminished by successes which others may have obtained. Those indeed I have done my best to abate. I might perhaps have chosen some *auto* of Calderon in which he soars with loftier wing; but this one, rather ethical than theological, offers itself to me as more within the sympathies of all, and less likely to startle than might be the case with some others.

* Vol. ii. p. 323.

The title which it bears, *The Great Theatre of the World*, will sufficiently indicate its subject. The observation that

> 'all the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players,'

has now become a commonplace, yet is one containing in it so deep a moral significance, so profound a truth, that it can never grow old or out of date. It is one to which Calderon recurred again and again. Thus in his very noble play *To know Good and Evil*, he briefly sums up all which he sets forth more at large in this *auto*; saying there:—

> En el teatro del mundo
> Todos son representantes.
> Cual hace un Rey soberano,
> Cual un Principe, ò un grande,
> Á quien obedecen todos;
> Y aquel punto, aquel instante
> Que dura el papel, es dueño
> De todas las voluntades.
> Acabóse la comedia,
> Y como el papel se acaba,
> La muerte en la vestuario
> Á todos los deja iguales.

Nor is he content with making such passing allusions to it; but in the *auto*, of which I am about to present some specimens, this thought furnishes, as will be seen, the idea on which he has wrought throughout.

Before going further let me say to the reader, above all in view of the opening scene, that what was not intended profanely or even over-boldly, but in strong religious earnestness and reverence, must be taken in no other sense by him; or, if he is unable so to take it, he will do best in not proceeding any further. In the first scene then the Author—which word I use, though 'Manager' would perhaps be a nearer rendering of the Spanish *autor**—appears with a mantle spangled with stars, and the triple rays of light (*potencias*) on his forehead. He summons the World, which describes itself as being shaped and moulded under his creative word; and informs it of his purpose to set out upon it a great pageant and representation for the display of his power and glory. Men are to be his company. He bids the World that it do not fail to provide richly all things needful to enable the several players to enact their allotted parts. The World in one of the long speeches for which Calderon was famous (the present exceeds two hundred lines), promises obedience; that the properties and furniture shall not be wanting, and so withdraws. And now the Author summons his future company—the Rich Man, the Beggar, the King, the Husbandman,†

* Ticknor indeed explains that *autor* in its technical theatrical sense means both (vol. ii. p. 438).

† No English word gives exactly the force of the Spanish *labra-*

the Lady or Beauty, the Recluse or Discretion, the Infant, as by a necessary prolepsis they are called, and distributes to them their several parts. The passage may well remind one of the distribution by Lachesis of the lots* to souls in *The Republic* of Plato. The parts are received with different feelings. Some are well pleased; others disappointed. The Beggar, for instance, seeing what his part must be, ventures a remonstrance:—

Why must I be acting so
Beggar in this comedy?
'Twill be tragedy for me,
Albeit for the others no.
When on me you did bestow
This same part, bestowed you not
Equal soul and equal thought
As on him who king will be?
Why then unto him and me
Such unequal parts allot?
Were I formed of other clay,
Or were fewer senses mine,
Or a spirit less divine,
Did my blood less freely play,
Cause sufficient, one might say,
Of this dealing would be shown:
But it seems too harshly done,

*dor.* He is no day-labourer in our sense; for though he labours with his own hands, it is also on his own ground. He more nearly resembles the Dutch 'boor.'

* Κλήρους καὶ βίων παραδείγματα.

That I say not cruelly,
When no better man than I
So much better part has won.

*Auth.* In the play you act he will
As securely win my praise,
Who the part of beggar plays
With true diligence and skill,
As who may the king's fulfil :
Equal too they prove, the one
And other, when the play is done.
Well fulfil thy part, and trust
I shall in award be just ;
I will know of difference none ;
Nor because more pain is laid
Upon thee who beggar art,
Is the king's a better part
Than the beggar's, if well played.
One and other shall be paid
Freely all their salary,
When it once deserved shall be ;
And with any part it can
Be so earned, the life of man
Being all one comedy.

*Beau.* Wilt thou, Sir, declare abroad
Of this comedy what name
Bears it on the tongue of fame?

*Auth.* ACT YOUR BEST, FOR GOD IS GOD.

*King.* Of all errors 'twere the worst
In this so mysterious play
To mistake.

*Rich M.* Then every way
Need is, we rehearse it first.

*Disc.* Yet how can it be rehearsed,
If without all power we be,
Soul to know, or light to see,
Till the time arrives to play?
*Begg.* But without rehearsing, say
Can we act the comedy?
In the oldest, oftenest played,
If it be not re-essayed,
Blunders always will ensue:
Then, unless we prove this new,
Some sad errors will be made.

However life is a play which must be acted without rehearsing, and they must accept its necessary conditions. Again, one of the company asks how they are to know the times of their entrances and exits. This also, they are answered, it needs not for them to know beforehand; let them be ready at any moment to close their part. He will summon them when it has reached its end. But how if at any time they are out in their parts, have forgotten or erred? The Law of Grace will act as prompter to set them right. Hereupon they are going off to the theatre, when the World meets and detains them.

*World.* All things now provided stand
To the end the comedy
May be acted worthily,
Which for mortal men is planned.

*King.* Crown and purple I demand.
*World.* Why must crown and robe be thine?
*King.* Even because this part is mine.
*World.* 'Tis already furnished here.
[*Gives him crown and purple, and he goes out.*
*Beau.* Unto me hues bright and clear,
Jasmine, rose, and pink assign.
Leaf by leaf, and ray by ray,
Emulously let disclose
Day whatever lights he knows,
And whatever flowers the May;
Let with envy pine away
The great sun to look on me;
And as his broad disk to see
Evermore the sun-flower turns—
Flower that for my brightness yearns,
Let the sun my sun-flower be.
*World.* But how play'st thou part so vain,
Vaunting to the World thy pride?
*Beau.* By this paper justified.
*World.* Which?
*Beau.* I beauty's part obtain.
*World.* Let all tints of costliest grain,
Deepest vermeil, snowiest white,
Vary for thee dark and light.
[*Gives her a chaplet of flowers.*
*Beau.* Round me richest hues I shed;
Founts, for me your mirrors spread,
Flowers, for me your carpets bright. [*Goes out.*
*Rich M.* Give felicities to me,
Wealth and all that wealth can bring;

For to taste each pleasant thing
I am come the World to see.

*World.* I will burst my breast for thee,
And draw forth to upper air
All the hidden treasures rare,
All the silver and the gold
Which my centre doth enfold,
Covetously hoarded there. [*Gives him jewels.*

*Rich M.* Proud, elate, and glorious I
With such treasure go my way. [*Goes out.*

*Disc.* Place to live in I to-day
From thy hands to seek am fain.

*World.* And what part dost thou sustain?

*Disc.* Cloistered Wisdom I must be.

*World.* Cloistered Wisdom, take from me
Sackcloth, discipline and prayer.
[*Gives her a scourge and sackcloth.*

*Disc.* I this Wisdom never were,
Did I more accept from thee. [*Goes out.*

*World.* Hast thou then no part to play,
That thou cravest nought of mine?

*Infant.* No, I need not aught of thine
For the little while I stay.
I shall never see the day,
Nor with thee shall I abide
Longer time than while I glide
From one dark and prison room
To another; and a tomb
Cannot be of thee denied. [*Goes out.*

*World.* What dost thou seek, fellow, say?

*Husb.* What I gladly would forego.

*World.* Pray, no more; your paper show.

*Husb.* What if I should answer, Nay?
*World.* From your mien infer I may
That as rude and clownish hind
You your bread shall seek and find.
*Husb.* Yes, that is my misery.
*World.* Take this spade then.
*Husb.* Legacy
Adam has to us consigned!
[*Takes the spade and goes out.*
*Begg.* Now that thou hast unto those
Joys allotted, glories, gains,
For my portion give me pains,
Give me sufferings and woes:
For my paper nothing knows
Of that kingly majesty;
Those bright hues come not to me;
Gold nor jewels I demand,
But rags only at thy hand.
*World.* But what part may thy part be?
*Begg.* It is utter wretchedness,
Want and weariness and ill,
'Tis to bear and suffer still,
It is anguish and distress,
All calamities to know,
To make trial of all woe;
Importuning, oh harsh task!
Always to have all to ask,
Nothing ever to bestow.
'Tis contempt and wrong and scorn,
It is mockery and blame,
It is insult, it is shame,
It is every thing forlorn;

Grief that ever one was born,
It is squalor, infamy,
Tatters, filth, and beggary,
Want of all things, and no less
Hunger, cold, and nakedness;
For all this is poverty.

*World.* But I will not give thee aught;
For who beggar plays with me,
Him I nothing give in fee;
And it rather is my thought
Of these rags to leave thee nought
On thy back; for so I will,
Being World, my charge fulfil. [*Strips him.*

*Begg.* So this base world evermore
Clothes him that was clothed before,
But the bare makes barer still. [*Goes out.*

*World.* Since the stage is now supplied
With its motley company,
For I there a monarch see
With his kingdoms broad and wide,
And a beauty that with pride
Of her charms all senses awes,
Great men having great applause,
Clownish hinds and beggars bare,
Or who in still cloisters fare,
All brought forward for this cause
That the persons they may play
Of this present comedy,
To whom I a stage supply,
Fit adornments and array,
Robes or rags, as suit it may,
Oh look forth, the pageant see,

Divine Author, which to Thee
Mortals play; this earthly ball
Let unfold, for there of all
That is played, the scene must be.

*Two globes open with music at the same time; in the one shall be a glorious throne, and on it the Author sitting; in the other the representation shall take place; this last must have two doors; on the one a cradle painted, on the other a coffin.*

*Auth.* Since I have devised this play,
That my greatness may be shown,
I here seated on my throne,
Where it is eternal day,
Will my company survey.
Mortals, who your entrance due
By a cradle find, and who
By a tomb your exit make,
Pains in all your acting take,
Your great Author watches you.

*Enter Discretion, with an instrument, and sings.*

Let praise the mighty Lord of earth and sky,
Sun, moon, and host of heaven;
To Him be praises given
From the fair flowers, the earth's emblazonry;
Let light and fire their praises lift on high,
And ice and frost and dew,
Summer and winter too,
And all that under this blue veil doth lie,
Whence He looks down, who still
Is Arbiter and Judge of good and ill.

*Auth.* Me no sound can more engage
Than the faithful canticle
On man's lips, which Daniel
Sang, that so he might assuage
The Chaldæan monarch's rage.

The Law of Grace acts as prompter, to remind each of his part should he forget it, and to correct the mistakes which any may make, and thus the play within the play begins.

*Enter Beauty and Discretion by the door of the Cradle.*

*Beau.* Come, and let us hand in hand
Through these pleasant meadows roam,
Which are May's delightful birth-place,
Which the sun woos evermore.

*Disc.* That to quit my cell I never
Wish, thou hast already known,
Never from the pleasant bondage
Of my cloister breaking forth.

*Beau.* And with thee must all things always
This austere aspèct put on?
Not a day of pleasure ever!
Tell me for what end did God
Fair flowers fashion, if the smell
Never shall the richness know
Of their fragrant censers swinging?
And the birds why made He more,
That with their delicious music
Float like wingèd harps of gold,
If the ear is not to hear them?

Why all tissues smooth and soft,
If the touch is not to crush them
With a free delight and bold?
Wherefore the delicious fruits,
If it were not to afford
With their seasonings to the taste
Cates of savours manifold?
Why in short has God created
Mountains, valleys, sun, or moon,
If the eye is not to see them?
Nay, with reason just I hold
We are thankless, not enjoying
All the rare gifts God bestows.

*Disc.* To enjoy by admiration
That may lawfully be done,
Thanking Him the while for all;
To enjoy their beauties no,
When we use, indeed misuse, them,
He their Giver quite forgot.
I abandon not my cloister,
Having this religion chose
For my life's tomb, and I thus
That I am Discretion show.

*Beau.* I that I am Beauty, while
To be seen and see I go. [*They part.*

*World.* Beauty and Discretion have not
Fellowship maintained for long.

*Disc.* How shall I my talent best
Turn to profit?

*Beau.* Make the most
Of my beauty how shall I?

*L. of Gr. Act your best; for God is God.*

*World.* Only one has heard, the other
Missed the words the prompter spoke.

Others enter, the Rich Man, the Husbandman—everything is characteristic, and managed with infinite variety and resource on the part of the poet; but we must pass over much. Presently the Beggar enters.

*Begg.* Who among all living men
May a direr misery know
Than is mine? this rugged soil
Is the softest bed I own
And the best; which if all heaven
For a canopy it boasts,
Lies unsheltered, unprotected
From the heat and from the cold.
Hunger me and thirst torment;
Give me patience, O my God.
*Rich M.* How shall I make ostentation
Best of all my wealth?
*Begg.* My woe
How shall I the best endure?
*L. of Gr. Doing well; for God is God.*
*Rich M.* Oh how that voice wearies me.
*Begg.* Oh how that voice me consoles.
*Disc.* To these gardens comes the king.
*Rich M.* How it grieves my haughty soul
To do homage here.
*Beau.* Myself
I will place the king before,
To make trial if my beauty
Him may in its nets enfold.

*Husb.* I will place myself behind him,
Lest he see me, and impose
Some new tax upon the peasant:
I expect no favour more.

*Enter the King.*

*King.* Of whate'er the sun illumines,
Of whate'er the sea enfolds,
I am master absolute,
I am the undoubted lord;
Vassals of my sceptre all
Bow themselves where'er I go.
What do *I* need in the world?

*L. of Gr.* *To do well; for God is God.*

*World.* She to each and all in turn
Still the best suggests and prompts.

*Begg.* From my depth of desolation
I unhappy must behold
Blisses, which are all for others.
Thus the king, the supreme lord,
Glories in his regal state,
Nor the want remembers once
That I feel: thus too the lady,
On her charms attent alone,
Knows not, guesses not if anguish
In the world is, want or woe.
The recluse, who unto prayer
Is addicted evermore,
If she serve God well, at least
With some comfort serveth God.
Nay, the husbandman, when weary
He returns from labour home,

Finds a decent board prepared him,
If it be no sumptuous board.
To the rich man all abounds';
And in all the world alone
Must I stand in need of all.
Therefore I to all approach,
For without me they can well
Live, but I without them no.
Of the lady I will venture
First to ask;—for love of God
Give an alms.

*Beau.* Ye crystal streams,
Which my mirrors are, report
What adornments best become me,
How my tresses seemliest flow.

*Begg.* Dost thou not perceive me?

*World.* Fool!
Seest thou not thy pains are lost?
How should she remember thee,
Who her own self has forgot?

*Begg.* Since thy wealth exceeds all measure,
On my needs an alms bestow.

*Rich M.* Are there then no gates to knock at?
Enterest thou my presence so?
But thou might'st at least have called,
Fellow, at the outer door,
Nor have pushed in boldly here.

*Begg.* Do not so much harshness show.

*Rich M.* You are troublesome; away.

*Begg.* Will he not one alms afford,
Who so much has wastefully
On his pleasures lavished?

*Rich M.* No.
*World.* Dives here and Lazarus
Of the parable behold.
*Begg.* Since my want and extreme need
No respect nor reason own,
I will sue the king himself;
Sire, on me an alms bestow.
*King.* A lord-almoner for this
I have named. What can I more?
*World.* With his ministers the king
Lulls his conscience to repose.
*Begg.* Husbandman, since thou receivest,
Through the blessing of the Lord,
For each grain to earth committed
Such an increase manifold,
My necessity from thee
Craves an alms.
*Husb.* 'Tis at the cost
Of good sowing, ploughing, sweating,
If I such receive of God.
Tell me, are you not ashamed,
A big fellow, stout and strong,
This way begging? Work, I say,
Live not idle like a rogue;
If indeed to eat you have not,
Take this mattock then and go,
You with it may earn your bread.
*Begg.* In the play we act belongs
Unto me the poor man's part,
But the husbandman's not so.
*Husb.* Friend, be thy part what it may,
Thee the Author never told

To enact the sturdy beggar.
Toil and sweat and labour strong
These the poor man's proper part are.

*Begg.* Be it for the love of God;
You are rigorous, my brother.

*Husb.* Shameless you and overbold.

*Begg.* Give me thou some consolation.

*Disc.* Pardon that it is not more. [*Gives an alms.*

We pass over a little in which the different parts are further brought out, and resume. The King makes a suggestion.

Seeing that this life of ours
Is a play and nothing more,
And that we are all together
Travelling the self-same road,
Let its present smoothness lead us
Fellowship in talk to hold.

*Disc.* World this were not, if it did not
So much fellowship afford.

*Rich M.* Let each tell by turns a story.

*Disc.* That were wearisome and long;
It were better each in order
Should his inmost thought unfold.

*King.* I gaze upon my kingdoms far and nigh,
The pomp, the pride, the glory that I own,
In whose variety has nature shown
Her patience and her prodigality.
Towers I possess built up unto the sky,
And beauty is a vassal at my feet;

Alike before me as my servants meet
Whatever is elsewhere of low or high,
A monster of so many necks, so strong,
So violent that I may wiselier rule,
Grant me what lore to monarchs should belong,
Lead and instruct me, Heavens, in wisdom's school;
For never with *one* yoke, to all applied,
May be subdued so many necks of pride.

*World.* He that he may govern rightly
Wisdom asks, like Solomon.

*A sad Voice from within sings, on the side at which is the door of the Coffin.*

Monarch of this fleeting realm,
Give thy pomp, thy glory o'er;
For on this world's theatre
Thou shalt play the king no more.

*King.* Speaks a sad voice in mine ear
That the part I play is o'er,
Voice which leaves me at the hearing
Without reason or discourse.
Then will I, my part concluded,
Quit the scene. But whither go?
For to that first portal, where
I my cradle did behold,
Thither ah'! return I cannot,
Woe is us! oh rigorous doom!
That we cannot tow'rd the cradle
Make one step, but tow'rd the tomb
Each must bring us nearer, nearer:

That the river, ocean-born,
From the sea drawn up, returning
Thither, may be sea once more ;
That the rivulet, derived
From the river, may restore
What it drew from thence, again
Being what it was before ;
But that man what once he was
Never can be any more.
If my part has reached its ending,
Mighty Author, sovereign Lord,
Its innumerable errors
Pardon, which at heart I mourn.

*He goes out at the door of the Coffin, as do all the others in their turn.*

*World.* Well the king his part has ended
With repentance at the close.
*Beau.* From the circle of his vassals,
Pomp and glory of his court,
Fails the king.
*Husb.* So spring showers fail not
At the due time for our corn,
With good crops and without king
We shall not have much to mourn.
*Disc.* Yet withal it is great pity;
*Beau.* And a matter to deplore.
What shall we do now?
*Rich M.* Return
To the talk we held before.
Say what in thy thought is passing.

*Beau.* This is passing in my thought—
*World.* But the living for the dead
Take not long to be consoled.
*Husb.* And above all, when the dead
Leave behind them ample store.

*Beau.* I gaze upon my beauty bright and pure,
Nor grudge the king, nor to his pomps incline ;
Since a more glorious empery is mine,
Even that which beauty doth to me assure ;
For if the king submission may secure
Of bodies, I of souls. I then define
With right my kingdom as the most divine,
Since souls can beauty to her sway allure.
A little world by sages man has been
Called ; but dominion if o'er him I claim,
Since every world contains an earth and heaven,
I may presume, nor thus should overween,
Who gave to man of little world the name,
Of little heaven to woman would have given.
*World.* She remembers not the saying
Of Ezekiel, when he showed
How through pride was perfect beauty
To corruption foul resolved.

*The Voice sings.*

All the beauty of the world
Is a flower of hastiest doom ;
Let it fail then ; for the night
Of its little day is come.
*Beau.* Let all earthly beauty fail,

So has sung a mournful song:
Let it fail not, but returning
Wear the grace that first it wore.
But ah me! there is, alas!
Neither white nor ruddy rose,
Which has to the flattering day
And the wooing sun unrolled
The rich beauty of its leaflets,
But must wither; there is known
Never one to shroud itself
In its green bud any more.*
But what matters that the flower,
Short-lived glory of the morn,
Fade and fail beneath the kisses
Of the great and burning orb?
What comparison with me
Can perchance a brief flower hold,
In whose being life and death,
Scarcely sundered, dwell next door?
None, for that fair flower am I,
Destined to endure so long
That the sun who saw my rising
Shall my setting ne'er behold?

* I must quote these eight lines in the original for their rare beauty:—

Mas ay de mí! que no hay rosa
De blanco ó roxo color,
Que á las lisonjas del dia,
Que á los alhagos del sol
Saque á deshojar sus hojas,
Que no caduque, pues no
Vuelve ninguna á cubrirse
Dentro del verde botòn.

If eternal, how can I
Ever fail? O voice, resolve.

*The Voice sings.*

Mortal flower in body thou,
Though eternal in the soul.

*Beau.* There is no reply to render
Unto this distinction more.
Forth from yonder cradle came I,
And toward this tomb I go.
Much it grieves me that my part
Has no better been performed. [*Goes out.*

*World.* She her part has finished well
With repentance at the close.

*Rich M.* From amid her gala pride,
Ornaments and glorious shows,
Beauty fails.

*Husb.* So bread and wine
Fail not, nor our Easter pork,
Beauty without very much
Of regret from me may go.

*Disc.* Yet 'tis a sad thought withal;

*Begg.* And it well might make us mourn.
What shall we do now?

*Rich M.* Return
To the talk we held before.

*Husb.* When I mark the care immense
Which I give my business here,
While nor summer's heat I fear,
Nor the winter's cold intense,
And then note the negligence
In the soul's work by me shown,

O'er this lukewarmness I groan,
Rendering thanks unto the field,
Which the crop doth only yield,
But to God who sent it, none.

*World.* He is near to gratitude,
Who himself a debtor owns.

*Begg.* To this labourer I incline,
Though he chided me before.

*The Voice sings.*

Husbandman, of all thy toil
Has arrived the fatal close;
Thou must till another soil,
What that is, God only knows.

*Husb.* If my part fulfilled I have not
With the care and pains I owed,
I am grieved that I am grieved not
That my sorrow is not more. [*Goes out.*

*Rich M.* From among his ploughs and mattocks,
Sweat and dust and labour, lo!
Disappears the husbandman.

*Begg.* And has left us here to mourn.

*Disc.* What shall we do now?

*Rich M.* Return
To the talk we held before.
I then, in the rear of others,
What is in my mind will show.
Who that lives were not dismayed
To observe our life a flower,
Springing with the morning hour,
Drooping with the evening shade?

If it then so soon must fade,
Let us enjoy merrily
The brief moments as they fly,
Let us eat and drink to-day,
All our appetites obey,
Since to-morrow we must die.

*World.* That the proposition is,
Which the Gentiles have put forth;
As Isaiah saith.

*Begg.* My turn
Follows now, my mind to show.

Would the day might perish quite,
Day when me my mother bore,
Perish utterly the night,
When I was conceived before
For this woe and undelight.
Never let the daylight pure
Bid that darkness to have done;
Ever let that night endure,
Let it look for light, and none
Find of moon or stars or sun.
Lord, if I in this way mourn,
'Tis no utterance of despair
At my sad estate forlorn,
But my lamentations are
That in sin I have been born.

*World.* Semblance of despair his passion
Wears, but yet it means not so:
He his birthday cursing, curses
His birth-sin, as Job before.

*The Voice sings.*

Its appointed time had joy,
Sorrow its appointed close ;
To your reckoning come alike,
From those blisses, and these woes.

*Rich M.* Woe is me !

*Begg.* What joyful tidings !

*Rich M.* And dost thou no shudderings own
At that voice which called thee ?

*Begg.* Yes.

*Rich M.* Think'st thou not to flee then ?

*Begg.* No.
That I shudder at this summons
Was but natural to the soul
Of a man, who being man,
Must have awful thoughts of God.
But why flee, when flight avails not ?
For if power found no resource
Fleeing to its haughty fortress,
Nor yet beauty to her boasts,
Where should poverty escape ?
Rather thousand thanks I owe,
For if now my life has ending,
With my life will end my woes.

*Rich M.* But to quit the theatre
How is it thou dost not mourn ?

*Begg.* While I leave no good thing in it ;
Of my own free will I go.

*Rich M.* Most reluctant I, whose heart
Tarries with its worldly store.

*Begg.* What delight !

*Rich M.* What misery !

*Begg.* What sweet comfort !

*Rich M.* What sharp woe ! [*They go out.*

*World.* In their deaths how different
Have the rich and poor man showed.

*Disc.* In effect upon the stage
I am tarrying now alone.

*World.* That which longest with me tarries
Is religion evermore.

*Disc.* Though she cannot have an end,
Yet can I, who her am not
In her essence, but one rather
Who this better portion chose.
And or e'er the summons finds me,
I the summons go before
Of the grave, who in my life
Have entombed myself, and so
Give an end to this day's play.
You who may the errors note
Of to-day, have care to mend them,
When arrives to-morrow's show.

The stage is left empty; the brief play of life has ended; and now the World enters to recover from each the properties with which he furnished them during the period of their acting, but which now are theirs no longer. The scene which follows, and which strikes me as a very fine one, will remind the classical scholar of Lucian's *Tenth Dialogue of the Dead*, in which Charon bids Mercury to strip the ghosts of all which they brought with them from the upper regions, lest this should sink his frail and leaky boat, greatly as

the Christian poet excels the scoffer of Samósata, not merely in moral earnestness, which is of course, but also in all his subordinate details as well. The *ottava rima* in which this scene is composed is of not unfrequent use in the statelier and more solemn parts of Calderon's plays.

*World.* The play was short—but what time with the play
Of this life did it otherwise befall,
Which in an entrance and an exit may,
Rightly considered, be included all?
Now from the stage are turning all away,
Their form, and all which they their own did call,
Being brought back to its materials just;
Dust they shall quit me, as they entered dust.
From all will I recover now with care
The toys I lent them, furnishing each one,
While they their parts on life's stage acting were,
Theirs only till the comedy was done.
Here to this portal will I now repair,
And overpass my threshold there shall none,
Till he restore the things he had in trust;
Dust they shall quit me, as they entered dust.

*Enter the King.*

Say what the part that was sustained by thee,
Being the first who to my hands art brought?

*King.* But has the world so soon forgotten me?

* With this scene before him, Klein, of whom I have spoken more than once already (see pp. 3, 48), devotes more than twenty pages to a showing of the utter futility (*Unwesen*) of this drama (vol. v. p. 609–630).

*World.* Of what has been the world remembers nought.

*King.* I am that one who held all realms in fee
That of the sun a golden light have caught
From his first waking in the lap of morn,
Till in the arms of night he sinks forlorn.
I ruled, I judged, I guided many a land;
I found, I won, I left a glorious name;
Great cares I entertained, great projects planned;
I fought, and victory to my banners came;
I lifted whom I would to high command;
Rare matter I bequeathed for after fame;
And under gorgeous canopies I sate,
And thrones and crowns were mine and sceptred state.

*World.* Well, leave, let go, and put this crown aside;
Strip off, renounce, forget that dignity;
Let thy poor person unaccompanied
Make from life's farce its exit nakedly.
The purple which thou boastest of in pride
Soon by another shall invested be,
For from my harsh grasp thou wilt seek in vain
Crown, sceptre, laurel, purple to detain.

*King.* Didst thou not give me that loved ornament,
Then what thou gavest wilt thou take away?

*World.* Ay, for it was not given, but merely lent,
And for the time thou hadst a part to play,
Thy trappings, to another to present,
I now require, and all thy rich array.

*King.* But how of wealthy vauntest thou the name,
With nought to give, but what thou first must claim?
What profit shall I after all have won

That to the world I have enacted king?

*World.* According as 'twas well or badly done,
'Twill praise or blame from the great Author bring.
Me it concerns not, knowledge take I none
What pains were thine, thy part accomplishing:
Only these trappings it is mine to claim,
For naked you must go, who naked came.

*Enter Beauty.*

Thy part, what was it?

*Beau.* Beauty's perfect bloom.

*World.* What lent I thee?

*Beau.* A faultless loveliness.

*World.* Where is it then?

*Beau.* Behind me in the tomb.

*World.* Here nature cannot her sharp grief repress,
Seeing how short is beauty's earthly doom,
Still growing worse than what it was and less:
I seeking to reclaim it, seek in vain;
Thou tak'st it not, nor I with it remain.
The king has left his majesty with me,
Greatness with me will leave its proud attire,
Beauty alone recovered cannot be,
Since beauty with its owner doth expire.
Look in this glass.

*Beau.* Myself therein I see.

*World.* Where is the fair face all did once admire?
That which I lent thee do thou now return.

*Beau.* It all has mouldered in the funeral urn.
There left I all fair colours and bright hues,
Jasmines and corals I abandoned there,

There did I all my flowers, my roses lose,
And crystals there and ivory shattered were;
And that did all clear portraitures confuse,
And tarnished all clear lines and features fair;
There was eclipsed the brightness of my light;
There you will meet but darkness, dust, and night.

*Enter the Husbandman.*

*World.* You, fellow, what did you play?
*Husb.* I was fain
To play the villain—start not at the name;
How should I else, seeing your fashion vain
Must for the husbandman this title frame?
He am I, whom the courtier with disdain
Treats, and with language of contempt and shame;
He am I, though this little grieves me now,
For whom the world had still its 'thee' and 'thou.'
*World.* Quit what I gave thee.
*Husb.* What was that, I pray?
*World.* A spade I gave thee.
*Husb.* Oh fine implement!
*World.* Well, fine or foul, with that you paid your way.
*Husb.* Whose heart were not for very anger rent?
Why what a cursèd world is this, I say;
Of all which avarice is on hoarding bent,
A mattock, instrument of wholesome toil,
One cannot rescue from the general spoil.

*Enter the Rich Man and the Beggar.*

*World.* Who passes?
*Rich M.* One who wishes he might ne'er
Have left thee.
*Begg.* One who panted every day
To leave thee.
*World.* But whence springs this difference rare?
One grieves to quit me, one had grieved to stay.
*Rich M.* Because that I was rich and mighty there.
*Begg.* Because I had the beggar's part to play.
*World.* Let go these toys.
*Begg.* Lo! what good cause was mine,
Leaving the world, to mourn not nor repine!

*Enter the Infant.*

*World.* To you a part at first the Author gave;
That you appeared not, how did it befall?
*Infant.* My life you re-demanded in a grave;
What you had given me, there returned I all.

*Enter Discretion.*

*World.* And what did you for your adornment crave,
When you did at the gates of being call?
*Disc.* I asked for a strict vow, obedience,
A scourge, a cord, and rigid abstinence.
*World.* Well, leave them in my hands, for none must say
That they have carried anything from me.
*Disc.* I will not; prayers and good works do not stay
In this world, here detained they cannot be;
And with me I must carry them away,
That something may survive thyself in thee.
Thou, if thy mind is, to resume them strive.

*World.* Thee of thy good deeds I cannot deprive:
These only from the world have rescued been.
*King.* Who would not now have called no realms his own!
*Beau.* Who would not now have ne'er been beauty's queen!
*Rich M.* Who would not fain have no such riches known!
*Begg.* Who would not willingly more griefs have seen!
*Husb.* Who would not more of toil have undergone!
*World.* It is too late—for after death in vain
You seek to blot out sins, or merits gain.
But now that I have marred the beauteous brow,
And the lent trappings mine again have made,
That I have caused all haughtiness to bow,
That I have equalled sceptre and rude spade,
Unto the stage of truth I send you now;
On this one only fictions have been played.
*King.* But why dost thou so rudely us dismiss,
Who greeted'st us so fair?
*World.* The cause is this.
What time a man doth anything expect,
Waiting the gift his hands he places so;
Which thing when he would scornfully reject,
With hands in this wise he will from him throw:
Even thus the cradle for a man is decked
With mouth above; reverse its mouth, and lo!
You have his tomb: even thus I gave you room
As cradle then, but now dismiss as tomb.

The play is now rapidly hastening to its end; but yet does not close without some further characteristic touches.

*Begg.* Since the world in this rude fashion
From its bosom thrusts us naked,
Let us seek that splendid feast,
Which has been prepared, the banquet
That shall recompense our toils.

*King.* Wilt thou too affront my greatness,
Daring thus to pass before me?
Has it from thy memory faded,
Wretched mendicant, already,
That thou wast my slave so lately?

*Begg.* Now that thy part is concluded,
We are equal, slave and master,
In this vestry of the tomb.
What thou *hast* been, little matters.

*King.* How forgettest thou that alms
Yesterday of me thou cravest?

*Begg.* How forgettest thou that such
Thou refused'st?

*Beau.* So soon failest
Thou in the respect thou owest
Unto me as richer, fairer?

*Disc.* All of us are equal now,
Having laid aside our garments;
For in this poor winding sheet
No distinction more remaineth.

*Rich M.* Do you go before me, villain?

*Husb.* Leave this foolish dream of greatness;
For, once dead, thou art the shadow
Of the sun that thou wast lately.

*Rich M.* Some strange fear in me the prospect
Of the Author's presence wakens.

*Begg.* Author of the earth and heaven,

All thy company, the players,
Who that briefest comedy
Played of human life so lately,
Are arrived, of that thy promise
Mindful, of that noble banquet.
Let the curtains be drawn back,
And thy glorious seat unveilèd.

With music the celestial globe opens once more;—but the little which remains may without difficulty be guessed; at all events it is too serious and solemn to be followed into its details, at least with our feelings and associations—seriously and solemnly although this, as all the rest, is both intended and carried out by the great Christian Poet, my brief and fragmentary specimens of whom have now come to their conclusion.

THE END.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

00023613

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018